UNDER EVERY GREEN TREE

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UNDER EVERY GREEN TREE:
POPULAR RELIGION IN SIXTH-CENTURY JUDAH

by
Susan Ackerman

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Popular Religion in Sixth-Century Judah

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by

Susan Ackerman

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PREFACE

This monograph is a minor revision of my Ph.D. dissertation, submitted in 1987 to the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University. My first and deepest thanks are owed to the members of my thesis committee: Frank M. Cross, Lawrence E. Stager, and Theodore J. Hiebert. These men were not only generous with their time, knowledge, and wisdom, but also gave freely kindness and encouragement, especially at times when my task seemed to me endless and futile. Paul D. Hanson was unable to be present for the final defense of the thesis, but his guidance and compassion throughout the writing process and, indeed, throughout my tenure at Harvard were deeply appreciated. I am further indebted to my other teachers at Harvard, particularly William L. Moran and Thomas O. Lambdin.

In Summer, 1988, I undertook a comparative study of Semitic and Greek incubation under the aegis of a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Seminar, "Religion and Society in Ancient Greece," directed by Michael H. Jameson of Stanford University. Although the basic arguments presented in Chapter 4 on dream rituals are the same as those in the dissertation, my research at Stanford did allow for certain refinements, and I am grateful to the National Endowment for the Humanities and to Dr. Jameson for their help and support. I am also grateful to the Warden and staff of St. Deiniol's Library in Hawarden, North Wales, who provided an idyllic setting in which to complete the manuscript's final draft. I wish too to thank the Dean and the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Winthrop College for the award of a Faculty Development Grant and the Dean and the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Dartmouth College for the award of the Walter Burke Research Initiation Award for Junior Faculty. Both of these made revision and publication of the dissertation possible. The Burke Award in particular allowed me to hire two research assistants, Mr. Charles Dubuque, who prepared the indices, and Ms. Christine Crabb, who undertook the responsibility of rendering the manuscript into a form acceptable to its publishers. This latter task was an exceedingly

tedious and thankless one, but Ms. Crabb performed it not only with extraordinary competence but also with exceptional good humor. This manuscript, which has taken a long time to see realization as a book, would have taken far longer without her.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
ADAJ	Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordon
AfO	*Archiv für Orientforschung*
AHW	W. von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch* 1–3
AJSL	*American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature*
AnBib	Analecta biblica
ANEP	J. B. Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near East in Pictures*
ANESTP	J. B. Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near East Supplementary Texts and Pictures*
ANET	J. B. Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (3d ed.)
AnOr	Analecta orientalia
Anton	*Antonianum*
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AOS	American Oriental Series
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
BA	*Biblical Archaeologist*
BARev	*Biblical Archaeology Review*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BDB	F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*
BHS	*Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia*
Bib	*Biblica*
BibOr	Biblica et orientalia
BJRL	*Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*
BO	*Bibliotheca orientalis*
BZ	*Biblische Zeitschrift*
BZAW	Beihefte zur *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
CAD	*The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*

CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
CIS	*Corpus inscriptionem Semiticarum* 1–5
CRAIBL	*Comptes rendus de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres*
CTA	A. Herdner, *Corpus des tablettes en cunéiformes alphabétiques découvertes à Ras Shamra-Ugarit de 1929 à 1939*
CTM	*Concordia Theological Monthly*
DN	Divine name
Dtr_1	Deuteronomistic History, first edition
Dtr_2	Deuteronomistic History, second edition
EA	The El-Amarna tablets according to the numeration of J. A. Knudtzon, *Die El-Amarna-Tafeln* 1–2
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
G	Greek
GKC	*Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, ed. and enlarged by E. Kautzsch; second English edition revised by A. E. Cowley
HALAT	W. Baumgartner, *Hebräische und aramäische Lexikon zum Alten Testament* (3d ed.) 1–3
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament
HKAT	Handkommentar zum Alten Testament
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
IB	*Interpreter's Bible*
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IDB	G. A. Butterick (ed.), *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*
IDBSup	Supplementary volume to *IDB*
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
JA	*Journal asiatique*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JB	A. Jones (ed.), *Jerusalem Bible*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JCS	*Journal of Cuneiform Studies*

JEA	*Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*
JHS	*Journal of Hellenic Studies*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
Joüon	P. Joüon, *Grammaire de l'hébreu biblique*
JPOS	*Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society*
JPSV	*Jewish Publication Society Version*
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
KAI	H. Donner and W. Röllig, *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften* 1–3
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
KB	L. Köhler and W. Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros*
KTU	M. Dietrich, O. Loretz, and J. Sanmartín, *Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit: Einschliesslich der keilalphabetischen Texte ausserhalb Ugarits* 1, *Transkription*
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
Leš	Lešonenu
LSJ	Liddell-Scott-Jones, *Greek-English Lexicon*
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
MVAG	Mitteilungen der vorderasiatisch-ägyptische Gesellschaft
NEB	*New English Bible*
NedTTs	*Nederlands theologisch tijdschrift*
NT	New Testament
OL	Old Latin
OLP	Orientalia lovaniensia periodica
OLZ	*Orientalische Literaturzeitung*
Or	*Orientalia* (Rome)
PE	Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica*
PEQ	*Palestine Exploration Quarterly*
Pesh	Peshitta
PN	Personal name

PRU	J. Nougayrol and Ch. Virolleaud, *Le palais royal d'Ugarit* 1–6
1QIsa[a]	First copy of Isaiah from Qumran Cave 1
RB	*Revue biblique*
RES	*Répetoire d'épigraphie sémitique* 1–8
RHR	*Revue de l'histoire des religions*
RivB	*Rivista biblica*
RS	Ras-Shamra
RSV	*Revised Standard Version*
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SEÅ	*Svensk exegetisk årsbok*
Sem	*Semitica*
SPAW	Sitzungberichte der preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften
StudOr	Studia orientalia
TDOT	G. J. Botterweck and H. H. Ringgren (eds.), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 1–5
Tg	Targum
UF	*Ugarit-Forschungen*
Ugaritica 5	J. Nougayrol, E. Laroche, Ch. Virolleaud, and C. F. A. Schaeffer, *et al.*, *Ugaritica* 5, *Nouveaux textes accadiens, hourrites et ugaritiques des archives et bibliothèques privées d'Ugarit, Commentaires des textes historiques (première partie)*
UT	C. H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook*
Vg	Vulgate
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum, Supplements
ZA	*Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZDPV	*Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins*

INTRODUCTION

For your gods have become as many
as your cities, O Judah,
And as many as the streets of Jerusalem
are the altars you erect.[1]

Anyone who proposes to address the topic of popular religion in ancient Israel or Judah properly begins by providing a definition of what Israelite popular religion is. This task is indeed made all the more urgent by the fact that the term popular religion has typically evoked in its hearers negative connotations; thus there has been a tendency to describe popular religion as the religion of the teeming masses, the uneducated, the lower classes, the rustics, the unsophisticated, the simple, or the *Volk*. The elitist point of view indicated here is surely to be decried, but even more serious a flaw is the vast oversimplification. Beliefs and rituals which are a part of the religion of the king may just as easily be "popular" as those which belong to the cult of the commoner; similarly the temple may as likely contain "popular" religion as the high places of the *bāmôt*.

What, then, is popular religion? It is perhaps easier to say what it is not: it is not the religion usually presented to us as normative in the Bible. More specifically, it is not the religion of the Deuteronomistic school, the priests, or the prophets, the three groups from whom the majority of our biblical texts come and the three groups who are the most influential in defining what biblical religion is. But this non-Deuteronomistic, non-priestly, non-prophetic orientation of popular religion should not lead us to the conclusion that popular religion is heterodoxy. What is heterodox and what is orthodox is a matter always decided in hindsight. Indeed, it was only the gradual process of canonization beginning in the post-exilic period that made

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[1]Jer 11:13.

Deuteronomistic, priestly, and prophetic religion the norm and that condemned the cults Deuteronomists, priests, and prophets denounced to obscurity and defamation.

Popular religion is in this sense about losers. But ironically, perhaps, these losers probably held the majority and represented the mainstream in their day. A description of Israelite popular religion is thus an essential component in any treatment of Israelite religion as a whole. Indeed, broadly speaking, the program that is called for here is a rewriting of the history of the religion of Israel so as to take popular religion fairly into account. This monograph cannot hope to achieve that goal. But it does attempt to make a contribution by describing popular religion in sixth-century Judah.

I have chosen the sixth century for a simple reason. In ancient Israel the sixth century was a time of almost unparalleled religious creativity. From this period come the haunting dirges of Lamentations and the probing theological questions of Job. Also during this time the Deuteronomistic school completed its great history of Israel and Judah (Deuteronomy–2 Kings), and the Priestly writers added their contributions to the epic (JE) version of the Tetrateuch (Genesis–Numbers). Among the prophets Jeremiah spoke unremittingly about the sins of Judah and the fall of Jerusalem which was the result. Yet after the fall, Second Isaiah preached a message of comfort and hope to those in Babylon who thought all hope was lost; similarly Ezekiel proclaimed a future vision of a rebuilt temple in a restored Jerusalem. The messages of these exilic prophets lived on in several post-exilic works: Isaiah 56–66; Haggai; and Zechariah 1–8, 9–14.

But we would be in error if we presumed that the theologies propounded in these biblical texts were the only manifestations of Israelite faith found in the sixth century. On the contrary, there were many alternative forms of religious expression that thrived in the exilic period. While these alternative religious expressions generally did not have the approval of the biblical writers, I would insist that these popular cults are an important witness to the religion of Israel in the exile. Along with the Priestly work, the Deuteronomistic history, the books of Job and Lamentations, and the sixth-century prophetic

texts, this sixth-century popular religion deserves to be studied as a part of the history of the exilic cult.

Finding sources for this popular religion, however, is not necessarily easy, for, as the cliché tells us, winners write history. That is, the Priestly writers, the Deuteronomistic historians, the authors of Job and Lamentations, and the prophets expressed their religious beliefs in writing, and their followers have preserved for us these writings until this day. These exilic theologies are thus readily available for examination and analysis. But those Israelites who worshiped other gods instead of or in addition to Yahweh and those who worshiped Yahweh in what the Deuteronomists, priests, and prophets considered an illegitimate fashion never wrote of their religion, or if they did, their words have not been preserved. Archaeological remains, especially epigraphical and iconographic data, offer us one entrée into this hidden popular religion. Comparative materials from the ancient Near East and from elsewhere in the Mediterranean are also useful. But such evidence is sparse and, in addition, not easily interpreted. Still, there is a way to recover some of the alternative religious expressions of the exilic period: our method is to study from a different perspective the sixth-century biblical writings. The prophetic works, in particular, will be a rich source of information. By focusing on the forms of religious expression which the sixth-century prophets condemn, we can begin to apprehend the diversity which characterized exilic religion. Moreover, by recognizing the polemical nature of the prophetic critiques and by resolving to read these critiques without prophetic prejudice and instead with a non-judgmental eye, we can place ourselves in a position to re-evaluate the traditional descriptions of the sixth-century cult. Our task, then, is to read anew; our aim is to judge afresh. With this goal in mind, we turn our attention to the major prophetic texts which will comprise our study: Jeremiah 7 and 44, Ezekiel 8, Isaiah 57, and Isaiah 65.

1. "AND THE WOMEN MAKE CAKES FOR THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN" JEREMIAH 7 AND 44

Twice in the book of Jeremiah, in Jer 7:16–20 and in 44:15–19, 25, the people of Judah are condemned for worshiping the Queen of Heaven. The initial passage, Jer 7:16–20, reads:

> (16) "And as for you [Jeremiah], do not pray for this people, do not lift up for their sake cry or prayer, do not intercede with me [Yahweh], for I will not heed you. (17) Do you not see what they are doing in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? (18) The children gather wood, the fathers kindle fire, and the women knead dough to make cakes for the Queen[1] of Heaven, and they pour out libations to other gods in order to provoke me. (19) But is it I they provoke?" says Yahweh. "Is it not they who are shamefaced?" (20) Therefore thus says Yahweh:[2] "Behold, my anger and my wrath will be poured out on this place, on human and on beast, on the tree of the field and on the fruit of the ground, and it will burn and not be extinguished."

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[1]The consonantal Hebrew text reads *lmlkt*, "for the Queen of." But the Masoretic tradition here, and in Jer 44:17, 18, 19, and 25, vocalizes *limleket*, as if the word were *lml'kt*, "for the work of [heaven]," i. e., "for the heavenly host." Many Hebrew manuscripts in fact read *lml'kt* (with an *'ālep*) in 7:18 and in 44:17, 18, 19, and 25. The Tg and Pesh support *lml'kt* in all five instances, as, apparently, does the G in 7:18 (*tę̄ stratiq̇*). But as is commonly recognized, the Masoretic pointing is an apologetic attempt to remove any hint that the people of Judah worshiped the Queen of Heaven. See R. P. Gordon, "Aleph Apologeticum," *JQR* 69 (1978–79), 112. The correct reading is *lĕmalkat*, "for the Queen of," supported by Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotian, by the Vg, and by the G of 44:17, 18, 19, and 25.

[2]MT *'dny yhwh* is expansionistic; omit *'dny* with the G.

This censure is part of a longer unit which runs from Jer 7:1 to 8:3. In this long unit various religious behaviors are attacked. Jeremiah 7 begins with Jeremiah's temple sermon (7:1–15), in which the people are criticized for trusting in the idea that Yahweh's temple is inviolable. Appended to the temple sermon are denunciations of several cult practices: the worship of the Queen of Heaven (7:16–20), reliance on sacrifice and offerings without true faithfulness (7:21–28), child sacrifice (7:29–34), and the worship of astronomical bodies (8:1–3). Commentators assign the temple sermon and its appended sayings to sometime during the reign of Jehoiakim, in the last decade of the seventh century.[3] The setting, of course, is Jerusalem.

The sayings appended to Jeremiah's temple sermon come from the hands of the Deuteronomistic editors of Jeremiah.[4] This means that we do not in fact know from Jeremiah 7 whether Jeremiah himself prophesied against the cult of the Queen of Heaven or, more important for our purposes, whether the Deuteronomistic editors are accurate in locating the cult in late pre-exilic Jerusalem. But Jer 44:15–19, 25 indicates that the Deuteronomistic tradition is reliable. This passage, which is like 7:16–20 part of a longer unit (44:1–30) criticizing the people for false worship, is from the mouth of the prophet himself. It reads:

> (15) And all the men who knew that their wives burned incense to other gods and all the women who stood by, a great assembly, all the

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[3]So, for example, J. Bright, *Jeremiah* (AB 21; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965), 58; B. Duhm, *Das Buch Jeremia* (Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament 11; Tübingen und Leipzig: J. C. B. Mohr, 1901), 74; W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah* 1 (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 252; W. Rudolph, *Jeremia* (3d ed.; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1968), 1; P. Volz, *Der Prophet Jeremia* (KAT 10; Leipzig: A. Deichertsche, 1928), 100; A. Weiser, *Das Buch des Propheten Jeremia* (ATD 20, 21; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1952), 70.

[4]Note the characteristic Deuteronomistic phraseology *dbrty . . . dbr* in Jer 7:22 and *dbrt . . . hdbrym* in 7:27. Similarly, see *hyyty lkm Plhym* in Jer 7:23. See further F. M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic. Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1973), 253 (point 6) and 254 (point 20).

> people dwelling in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, answered Jeremiah: (16) "As for the matter about which you have spoken to us in the name of Yahweh, we will not heed you, (17) but we will surely do all that we have vowed: burn incense to the Queen of Heaven and pour out libations to her, as we did, we and our ancestors, our kings and our princes, in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, for then we had plenty of food, and it went well with us, and we saw no evil. (18) But since we ceased to burn incense to the Queen of Heaven and to pour out libations to her,[5] we have lacked everything, and we have been consumed by the sword and by famine." (19) [And the women said,][6] "Indeed, we burned incense to the Queen of Heaven and poured out libations to her. And was it without our husbands' consent that we made for her cakes in her image[7] and poured out libations to her?"
>
> . . . (25) Thus says Yahweh of hosts, God of Israel: "As for you women,[8] you have spoken with your mouths and with your hands you have fulfilled it, saying: 'We will surely perform our vows which we have vowed: to burn incense to the Queen of Heaven and to pour out libations to her.' Now fulfill your vows and perform them!"[9]

These verses make it clear that Jeremiah himself rejected the worship of the Queen of Heaven. Moreover, note that Jer 44:15–19, 25 is set in Egypt after the fall of the temple in Jerusalem. That the cult of the Queen of Heaven is a problem for Jeremiah in early sixth-century Egypt suggests that the Deuteronomistic editors of Jeremiah 7 are correct in identifying the worship of the Queen as a problem in late seventh-century Jerusalem. Jeremiah 44 in fact indicates that the worship of the Queen of Heaven has its origins in the pre-exilic period. The people say of their participation in the cult, "We will surely do all

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[5]G lacks *hsk lh nskym*, "to pour out libations to her."

[6]The Lucianic tradition reads *kai hai gynaikes eipon*, which is necessary for the sense.

[7]Reading *lĕhaʿăṣîbāh* for MT *lĕhaʿăṣîbâ*. On suffixal *hē* without *mappîq*, see GKC, 56g and cf. 91e.

[8]Reading with the G for MT *ʾtm wnšykm*, since the verbs of v 25 are second-person feminine forms.

[9]Deleting the second *nidrêkem* of v 25 with the G.

that we have vowed . . . as we did, we and our ancestors,[10] our kings and our princes, in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem" (Jer 44:17; see also 44:21). The Judahites had, as the Deuteronomistic editors of Jeremiah maintained, worshiped the Queen of Heaven in Jerusalem (Jer 7:16–20), and, as Jeremiah's own words tell us, they continued to worship the Queen after the fall of Judah (Jer 44:15–19, 25). They even brought her cult with them as they fled into Egypt before their Babylonian conquerors. Jer 7:16–20 and 44:15–19, 25 thus describe a cult which thrived in late seventh-century Jerusalem and which continued to be a part of the religion of those refugees who fled to Egypt in the first quarter of the sixth century. Our task, by examining both Jer 7:16–20 and 44:15–19, 25, is to analyze the nature of this cult of the Queen of Heaven and to discuss the cult's place in the religion of sixth-century Judah.

The identity of the Queen of Heaven is a question which has long plagued biblical commentators. The majority view would identify the Queen of Heaven as Assyro-Babylonian Ištar,[11] but that majority is slight; there is by no means a consensus among scholars. A strong case can be made for identifying the Queen of Heaven with the west Semitic

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[10]Literally "our fathers," but certainly what is implied here is past generations.

[11]The original presentation is that of Eb. Schrader, "Die *mlkt hšmm* und ihr aramäisch-assyrisches Aequivalent," SPAW (1886), 477–491; among moderns see as representative Bright, *Jeremiah*, 56; M. Held, "Studies in Biblical Lexicography in the Light of Akkadian," *Eretz Israel* 16 (1982), 76–77 (Hebrew); J. P. Hyatt, "The Book of Jeremiah: Introduction and Exegesis," *IB* 5 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1956), 873–874; Y. Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel. From its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile* (trans. and abridged M. Greenberg; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1960), 408; M. H. Pope, *Song of Songs* (AB 7c; Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1977), 149 (but see n. 12 below); W. E. Rast, "Cakes for the Queen of Heaven," *Scripture in History and Theology: Studies in Honor of J. Coert Rylaarsdam* (ed. A. L. Merrill and T. W. Overholt; Pittsburgh Theological Monograph Series 17; Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1977), 167–180; Rudolph, *Jeremia*, 55; Volz, *Jeremia*, 99–100; M. Weinfeld, "The Worship of Molech and the Queen of Heaven and its Background," *UF* 4 (1972), 148–154; Weiser, *Jeremia*, 70.

equivalent of Ištar, Canaanite Astarte,[12] or for identifying the Queen as a syncretistic deity who combines traits of east Semitic Ištar and west Semitic Astarte.[13] Others maintain that the Queen of Heaven should be identified with the west Semitic goddess Anat.[14] M. Dahood has further proposed that the Queen of Heaven is the sun goddess, Šapšu.[15] Finally,

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[12]E. Bresciani and M. Kamil, *Le lettere aramaiche di Hermopoli* (Atti della Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei 8/12; Roma: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1966), 400; R. du Mesnil du Buisson, *Études sur les dieux phéniciens hérités par l'Empire Romain* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 126–127; W. Culican, "A Votive Model from the Sea," *PEQ* 108 (1976), 121–122; J. Fitzmyer, "The Phoenician Inscription from Pyrgi," *JAOS* 86 (1966), 287–288; W. Herrmann, "Aštart," *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung* 15 (1969), 29, n. 67; Holladay, *Jeremiah* 1, 254–255; S. M. Olyan, "Some Observations Concerning the Identity of the Queen of Heaven," *UF* 19 (1987), 161–174; M. H. Pope, "ʿAṯtart, ʿAštart, Astarte," in M. H. Pope and W. Röllig, "Syrien. Die Mythologie der Ugariter und Phönizer," *Wörterbuch der Mythologie* (ed. H. W. Haussig; Stuttgart: Ernst Klett, 1965), 251 (but see n. 11 above); M. H. Silverman, *Religious Values in the Jewish Proper Names at Elephantine* (AOAT 217; Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1985), 225, n. 6.

[13]Note, for example, the comments of Fitzmyer, "Pyrgi," *JAOS* 86 (1966), 287; of Rast, "Cakes for the Queen of Heaven," *Scripture in History and Theology*, 170; and cf. Bright, *Jeremiah*, 56. M. H. Pope may also indirectly indicate his support of such a thesis, since he identifies the Queen of Heaven as Astarte in *Wörterbuch der Mythologie*, 251, but as Ištar in *Song*, 149.

[14]W. F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan. A Historical Analysis of Two Contrasting Faiths* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1968), 130; M. Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion: Assyria, Judah and Israel in the Eighth and Seventh Centuries B.C.E.* (SBLMS 19; Missoula, MT: Scholars, 1974), 85; A. S. Kapelrud, *The Violent Goddess. Anat in the Ras Shamra Texts* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1969), 13, 16; J. McKay, *Religion in Judah under the Assyrians, 732–609 BC* (SBT [Second Series] 26; Naperville, IL: A. R. Allenson, 1973), 110–111, n. 19; B. Porten, *Archives from Elephantine. The Life of an Ancient Jewish Military Colony* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 1968), 165, 177; A. Vincent, *La religion des Judéo-Araméens d'Éléphantine* (Paris: Librairie orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1937), 635, 649–651; G. Widengren, *Sakrales Königtum im Alten Testament und im Judentum* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1952), 12.

[15]M. Dahood, "La Regina del Cielo in Geremia," *RivB* 8 (1960), 166–168.

there are those who maintain that it is impossible, given the data currently available, to decide who the Queen of Heaven is.[16]

It is, of course, the lack of solid data about the Queen of Heaven which confounds biblical scholars. The book of Jeremiah is quite sparse in what it reveals about the goddess. Still, a minimum of four identifying characteristics can be isolated from Jer 7:16–20 and 44:15–19, 25. The first datum, obviously, is the epithet "Queen of Heaven" itself. The goddess is mentioned some five times in Jeremiah 7 and 44 (7:18; 44:17, 18, 19, 25); nowhere is she called other than Queen of Heaven. We can thus eliminate any potential candidate who is not well described as Queen or Queen of Heaven. In addition, the association of the goddess with the heavens should indicate that she has astral features. Although neither of these data are decisive, since any of the great goddesses can be called Queen or even Queen of Heaven[17] and since goddesses other than those called Queen of Heaven can have astral features, both will ultimately prove useful.

The worship of the Queen of Heaven, according to Jeremiah, includes the burning of incense, the pouring out of libations, and the baking of cakes (*kawwānîm*) "in her image" (Jer 44:19). Of these three cultic acts, the offering of cakes to the Queen of Heaven seems to be the most important; certainly in Jer 7:18 and in 44:19 the baking of cakes is stressed as crucial to the cult of the Queen. And, while it is clear that along with burning incense and pouring out libations, making bread or grain offerings is a cult act associated with most, if not all, ancient Near Eastern gods, the stress on the cakes baked for the Queen of Heaven is significant and will be important in isolating her identity.

Moreover, the people of Judah seem to view the Queen as a fertility goddess; they claim that when they worshiped her, "we had plenty of food and we prospered" (Jer 44:17). Conversely, "since we stopped burning incense to the Queen of Heaven and stopped pouring out libations to her, we have lacked everything and have been consumed

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[16]Among an older generation, B. Duhm, *Jeremia*, 79; more recently, J. Gray, "Queen of Heaven," *IDB* 3 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), 975a, b.

[17]"Of course, . . . *mulk* or *milkat*, 'royalty,' 'queen,' is appropriately applied to any one of the three great goddesses." Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 31.

. . . by famine" (44:18). The Queen also seems to have some associations with war: her proper worship guaranteed that the people "saw no evil" (44:17), but when her cult was abandoned, "we were consumed by the sword" (44:18).

Finally, we observe that the cult of the Queen of Heaven holds special appeal for women. It is women who make the cakes for the Queen (Jer 7:18; 44:19) and who pour out libations and offer incense to her (Jer 44:15, 19). Indeed, Jeremiah makes the women of Judah the object of his special scorn because of their devotion to the Queen of Heaven (Jer 44:25):

> As for you women, you have spoken with your mouths and with your hands you have fulfilled it, saying: "We will surely perform our vows which we have vowed: to burn incense to the Queen of Heaven and to pour out libations to her." Now fulfill your vows and perform them!

Keeping these four criteria in mind, that we are searching for a goddess who bears the epithet Queen of Heaven, whose cult is particularly associated with offering cakes, who is associated with fertility and somewhat with war, and who is especially worshiped by women, we now turn to the deities Šapšu, Anat, Astarte, and Ištar who have been nominated as Jeremiah's Queen of Heaven.

Šapšu

As almost all scholars have recognized, M. Dahood's suggestion that the Queen of Heaven is Šapšu, the goddess of the sun in west Semitic religion, can hardly be correct. Dahood bases his claim on *CTA* 23.54, *šu ʿdb lšpš rbt wlkbkbm kn*[*m*], which he translates, "Arise, prepare cakes (*kn*[*m*]) for Lady Šapšu and for the stars." Although he does not specifically address the epithet of the goddess, Dahood presumably equates the epithet *rabbat*, "Lady," with *malkat*, "Queen." Moreover, he implies that the fact that the sun is the dominant feature of the daytime sky well qualifies Lady Šapšu for the title "Queen of Heaven." But most important for Dahood's analysis is his understanding of *kn*[*m*] as "cakes." Dahood relates Ugaritic *kn*[*m*], which he vocalizes as *kônîma* (acc. pl.), to Hebrew *kawwānîm*, the cakes baked for the Queen of Heaven in Jeremiah 7 and 44. The collapse of *-awwā-* > *ô* which

such an etymology presumes Dahood explains by analogy to Ugaritic *lôtanu*, Hebrew *liwyātān*, "Lôtan, Leviathan."[18]

The reading of *kn*[*m*] in *CTA* 23.54 is not certain, but in fact many scholars, like Dahood, read *m* as the final letter of the word.[19] Others read *kn*[*t*].[20] However, none, to my knowledge, interpret *kn*[ ] as "cakes," preferring rather to take *knm* or *knt* as an adjective of the root *kwn*, meaning "fixed."[21] Ps 8:4 suggests the appropriateness of the root *kwn*, "to fix, establish," for describing stars:

> When I see your heavens, the works of your fingers,
> the moon and stars which you have established (*kônantâ*).

T. H. Gaster has in addition pointed out that the root *kwn* is used in Akkadian to describe Venus, the Morning Star: *mulDIL.BAT ina šēreti ikūn*, "Venus becomes stationary in the morning."[22]

We also note that despite her dominance in the sky, Šapšu is nowhere called Queen (only *rabbat*, "lady") or Queen of Heaven. Neither is she associated particularly with fertility or with war. There is no evidence that the Šapšu cult is one particularly attractive to women. In short,

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[18]Dahood, "La Regina del Cielo," *RivB* 8 (1960), 167–168.

[19]For example, G. R. Driver, *Canaanite Myths and Legends* (2d ed.; ed. J. C. L. Gibson; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1977), 126; T. H. Gaster, "A Canaanite Ritual Drama: The Spring Festival at Ugarit," *JAOS* 66 (1946), 54; similarly, R. Largement, *La naissance de l'aurore: Poème mythologique de Ras Shamra-Ugarit* (Gembloux: J. Duculot; Louvain: E. Nauwelaerts, 1949), 24.

[20]J. Aistleitner, *Wörterbuch der ugaritischen Sprache* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1974), 151; J. de Moor, *New Year with Canaanites and Israelites*, Part 2, *The Canaanite Sources* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1972), 22.

[21]For example, Driver, *Canaanite Myths*, 126; Gaster, "Ritual Drama," *JAOS* 66 (1946), 54; and Largement, *La naissance*, 24, who translate *knm* as "fixed," "fixed," and "fixes" respectively. Aistleitner (*Wörterbuch*, 151) and de Moor (*New Year*, Part 2, 22), who read *knt* rather than *knm*, interpret similarly: Aistleitner translates "festgesetztes Opfer"; de Moor translates "stable."

[22]See Gaster, "Ritual Drama," *JAOS* 66 (1946), 57, n. 55; G. Meier, "Kommentaire aus dem Archiv der Tempelschule in Assur," *AfO* 12 (1937–9), 240, and n. 24.

Dahood's nomination of Šapšu as Jeremiah's Queen of Heaven has rightly been rejected by biblical scholars.

Anat

It is somewhat more promising to identify Anat as the Queen of Heaven. The case for this equation was first advanced by A. Vincent.[23] Vincent based his identification in part on a twelfth-century (Twentieth Dynasty) stele from Beth-Shan, on which an Egyptian is shown with hands raised, worshiping "Anat, Lady of Heaven (*nbt pt*), Mistress of All the Gods."[24] The same title, "Lady of Heaven," is applied to Anat on several inscriptions of Ramesses II[25] and on a jar of Prince Psammetichus from the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty (seventh century).[26] In 1968 Vincent's identification was strengthened by the publication of *Ugaritica* 5. In *Ugaritica* 5, 2 (RS 24.252), Anat is called *bʿlt mlk*, *bʿlt drkt*, and *bʿlt šmm rmm*, "Mistress of Kingship, Mistress of Dominion, and Mistress of the Highest Heavens" (lines 6–7).

Another piece of evidence that suggests Anat is the Queen of Heaven is Hermopolis Letter 4, which begins (line 1) with a salutation to the temple of the Queen of Heaven.[27] The Queen is not identified. But G.

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[23]Vincent, *La religion des Judéo-Araméens*, 635, 649–651.

[24]See A. Rowe, *The Four Canaanite Temples of Beth-Shan* Part 1 (Publications of the Palestine Section of the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1940), 34 and Pl. 65A, 1; for a readily accessible translation, see *ANET* (3d ed.), 249b.

[25]See P. Montet, *Les nouvelles fouilles de Tanis (1929–1932)* (Publications de la faculté des lettres de Strasbourg, Deuxième série, 10; Paris: Belles Lettres, 1933), 107–108, 125–126, and Pl. 54 and 70; G. Goyon, "Deux steles de Ramses II au Gebal Chalouf," *Kêmi. Revue de philologie et d'archéologie égyptiennes et coptes* 7 (1938), 115–122, especially p. 121. The Ramesside texts have been collected and commented on in R. Stadelmann, *Syrisch-Palästinensische Gottheiten in Ägypten* (Probleme der Ägyptologie 5; Leiden: Brill, 1967), 91–93.

[26]See B. Grdseloff, *Les débuts du culte Rechef en Égypte* (Cairo: L'Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1942), 28–29.

[27]For the Hermopolis material, see Bresciani and Kamil, *Le lettere aramaiche.*

Widengren in 1952[28] and B. Porten in 1968[29] argued that the existence of a temple dedicated to the Queen of Heaven in fifth-century Egypt requires us to identify the Queen with a goddess popular among west Semites in Egypt in the fifth century. On the basis of Elephantine *ʿntyhw* and *ʿntbytʾl*,[30] the fifth-century Aramaic inscription from Memphis of Meshahel, priest of Anat,[31] and personal names containing the theophoric element *ʿnt* from Elephantine and Hermopolis, Porten, in particular, proposed that Anat was the goddess most popular in both the Jewish and Aramaic Egyptian colonies. Thus, he argued, it was to her that the temple of the Queen of Heaven was built in Syene.

Finally, we note that Anat has clear associations with both fertility and war. In Egypt Anat is known as a goddess of war. Depictions of the goddess show her holding weapons of battle.[32] In written materials from the Nineteenth Dynasty she is described as "a woman acting (as) a warrior, clad as a male and girt as a female."[33] Similarly in other Egyptian New Kingdom texts Anat is likened to a shield[34] and to a part

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[28]Widengren, *Sakrales Königtum*, 12.

[29]Porten, *Archives*, 165; see also idem, "The Religion of the Jews of Elephantine in the Light of the Hermopolis Papyri," *JNES* 28 (1969), 120.

[30]A. E. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1923), #44.3 and #22.125, respectively.

[31]E. Bresciani, "Nuovi documenti aramaici dall'Egitto," *Annales du Service des antiquités de l'Égypte* 55 (1958), 281–283.

[32]See BM Stele 191, pictured in H. Gressmann, *Alterorientalische Texte und Bilder* 2 (Berlin und Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter, 1929), No. 270, and note the comments of W. F. Albright, "The Evolution of the West Semitic Deity ʿAn-ʿAnat-ʿAttâ," *AJSL* 41 (1925), 82 and n. 5; also see the vase of Prince Psammetichus, pictured in Grdseloff, *Les débuts du culte Rechef*, Pl. 5 (opposite p. 28), and Pl. 6 (opposite p. 32).

[33]Papyrus Chester Beatty VII, verso i, 8–9. For text and translation, see *Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum. Third Series. Chester Beatty Gift* 1 (ed. A. H. Gardiner; London: British Museum, 1935), 62–63; see also *ANET*, 250a, n. 18; Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, 129.

[34]W. F. Edgerton and J. A. Wilson, *Historical Records of Ramesses III* (Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization 12; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1936), 75; see also *ANET*, 250a and n. 18.

of a war chariot.[35]

At Ugarit, too, Anat is a war goddess. Again this is indicated by Anat's iconography[36] and also by literary texts. It is Anat who defeats the god of death, Môt, thus freeing Baal from the confines of the underworld (*CTA* 6.2.30–35). Elsewhere in the Baal cycle Anat claims she defeated Lôtan (Hebrew Leviathan), the multi-headed sea-dragon, and/or Yamm (Sea).[37] The goddess adorns herself with a necklace of skulls and a girdle of hands (*CTA* 3.2.11–13). Her joy in battle is vividly described in this passage (*CTA* 3.2.23–28):

> She fought hard and looked,
> Anat battled and saw:
> Her liver swelled with laughter,
> Her heart was filled with joy,
> The liver of Anat was exultant,
> As she plunged knee-deep in the blood of the mighty,
> Up to her hips in the gore of warriors.

Anat's violent and ruthless behavior is further evident in the epic of Aqhat, where she schemes against Aqhat and eventually kills him in order to gain possession of his magnificent bow and arrows (*CTA* 17.6; 18.4).

Anat is also associated with fertility. Her defeat of Môt is described thus (*CTA* 6.2.30–35):

> She seized El's son, Môt.
> With a sword she cleaved him;
> With a sieve she winnowed him;
> With a fire she burnt him;
> With millstones she ground him;
> In a field she sowed him.

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[35]W. R. Dawson and T. E. Peet, "The So-Called Poem on the King's Chariot," *JEA* 19 (1933), 169 (verso, lines 12–14); see also *ANET*, 250a and n. 17.

[36]See U. Cassuto, *The Goddess Anath* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1971), frontispiece.

[37]*CTA* 3.3.35–39 and *PRU* 2, 3.3–11; see the discussion of Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 118–119.

The dead god's body is obviously being used by Anat in an agrarian ritual which brings fertility to the fields. Elsewhere at Ugarit, we are told that Yaṣṣib, Kirta's son, will suck at the breasts of Asherah and of Virgin Anat (*CTA* 15.2.27).[38] Anat's epithet as one of "the great goddesses who conceive but do not bear,"[39] her sexual union with Baal in *CTA* 10 and 11,[40] and the fact that it is presumably Anat who, in the form of a heifer, mates with Baal in *CTA* 5[41] further attest to her place in a fertility cult.

There are, however, compelling reasons for rejecting the identification of Anat as the Queen of Heaven of Jeremiah 7 and 44. Much of the evidence which supports the identification of Anat as the Queen of Heaven is second millennium in date. The Egyptian material cited by Vincent and others is primarily from the New Kingdom, especially from the period of Ramesses II, who seems to have been particularly devoted to Anat.[42] The Ugaritic material is all from the

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[38]Although Anat's name is restored here, the restoration of *ʿnt* following Anat's standard epithet, *btlt*, seems certain. See Driver, *Canaanite Myths*, 91; H. L. Ginsberg, *The Legend of King Keret: A Canaanite Epic of the Bronze Age* (BASOR Supplementary Studies Nos. 2–3; New Haven: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1946), 23; J. Gray, *The KRT Text in the Literature of Ras Shamra* (Leiden: Brill, 1955), 15.

[39]From the Papyrus Harris; see W. F. Albright, "The North-Canaanite Epic of ʾAlʾêyân Baʿal and Môt," *JPOS* 12 (1932), 193; idem, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1942), 75; W. Helck, *Die Beziehungen Aegyptens zu Vorderasien im 3. und 2. Jahrtausend v. Chr.* (2d ed.; Ägyptologische Abhandlungen 5; Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1971), 462; J. Leclant, "Astarté à cheval d'après les représentations égyptiennes," *Syria* 37 (1960), 7; J. B. Pritchard, *Palestinian Figurines in Relation to Certain Goddesses Known throughout Literature* (AOS 24; New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1943), 79.

[40]On these texts, see Kapelrud, *The Violent Goddess*, 94–98; Pope, *Song*, 382.

[41]*CTA* 5.5.17–25. See Pope, *Song*, 382; Pritchard, *Palestinian Figurines*, 77.

[42]Pritchard, *Palestinian Figurines*, 78–79; Stadelmann, *Gottheiten*, 91–95.

Late Bronze Age. Although religious traditions are notoriously conservative, this second millennium evidence is not conclusive in proving that Anat was the Queen of Heaven in Jeremiah's time.[43]

The evidence from Elephantine and from Hermopolis is, of course, from the first millennium and in fact is roughly contemporary with Jeremiah 7 and 44. But we must question the contention of Porten and others that Anat is an important goddess in these Jewish and Aramaic colonies. None of the data Porten cites, the divine names *ʿntyhw* and *ʿntbytʾl*, the Aramaic inscription of Meshahel, priest of Anat, and the theophoric element *ʿnt* in Jewish and Aramaic personal names, are solid. The theophoric element *ʿnt* never occurs in an isolated state at Elephantine or Hermopolis. Moreover, in personal names the element *ʿnt* occurs only twice, in the hypocoristicon ʿAnati.[44] The element *ʾt* in two other names, *ʾtdly/ʾtdry*[45] and *ʾtʿdry*,[46] is taken by Porten[47] and by M. H. Silverman[48] as a variant form of *ʿnt*. Still, this yields only four Anat names. This sparsity would hardly indicate a flourishing cult of the goddess at either Syene or Elephantine.

Moreover, J. Naveh has called into question the authenticity of the Meshahel, priest of Anat, inscription.[49] The inscription is one of six from the Michaelidis collection published by E. Bresciani. Naveh argues that five of Bresciani's Michaelidis inscriptions are forgeries. He withholds judgment on the Meshahel, priest of Anat, inscription because it is illegible in the photograph of the *editio princeps*. The

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[43]This point is stressed by M. H. Silverman, *Religious Values*, 224–225.

[44]Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri*, #22.108; Hermopolis Letter 4.3.

[45]Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri*, #5.6, #13.18; E. G. Kraeling, *The Brooklyn Museum Aramaic Papyri* (New Haven: Yale University, 1953), #3.23. Cowley and Kraeling read *ʾtrly*; for *ʾtdly*, see Silverman, *Religious Values*, 63, n. 2.

[46]Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri*, #2.20.

[47]Porten, *Archives*, 165.

[48]Silverman, *Religious Values*, 168.

[49]J. Naveh, "Aramaica Dubiosa," *JNES* 27 (1968), 321, n. 4. See also M. H. Silverman, "Onomastic Notes to 'Aramaica Dubiosa,'" *JNES* 28 (1969), 195 and n. 25, on the personal name Meshahel (*mšhʾl*).

Meshahel, priest of Anat, inscription, however, should be approached with extreme suspicion. That the companion pieces of the inscription are forgeries certainly suggests that the inscription in which we are interested is likewise a fake.

The most difficult of the data cited by Porten in support of the equation that Anat is the Queen of Heaven are the divine names *ʿntyhw* and *ʿntbytʾl*. Already in 1925 W. F. Albright suggested that the *ʿnt* element in these divine names should be understood as meaning "sign" or "providence," as in Akkadian *ittu*, "sign, omen" (< **intu*), Hebrew *ʿēt* (< **ʿintu*), "sign, time, destiny," and Aramaic *ʿantāʾ*, "sign." This "sign" or "providence" is properly taken as a hypostatized quality of the deities Yahu and Bayt'il.[50] The divine name *ʿntyhw* should be translated as "the sign/providence of Yahu"; *ʿntbytʾl* means "the sign/providence of Bethel." Thus the two divine names *ʿntyhw* and *ʿntbytʾl*, according to Albright, have nothing to do with the goddess Anat. Albright has been followed by many,[51] and Porten himself, who relies heavily on the divine names *ʿntyhw* and *ʿntbytʾl* to establish the equation that Anat equals the Queen of Heaven, notes the possibility that *ʿnt* may not be a theophoric element in these two divine names. As Porten states, "This explanation would sever the Anath of this compound from the Queen of Heaven."[52] We conclude that Porten is wrong to claim that Anat is the goddess most popular at Elephantine and Syene. It therefore seems unlikely that Anat would be the goddess to whom the temple of the Queen of Heaven mentioned in Hermopolis 4.1 was dedicated.

Our doubts that Anat plays an important part in the religious cult at either Elephantine or Syene are confirmed by observing that Anat

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[50]W. F. Albright, "ʿAn-ʿAnat-ʿAttâ," *AJSL* 41 (1925), 94–97; see also idem, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, 174; idem, *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (2d ed.; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1957), 373.

[51]See, for example, J. T. Milik, "Les papyrus araméens d'Hermoupolis et les cultes syro-phéniciens en Égypte perse," *Bib* 48 (1967), 567. M. H. Silverman, *Religious Values*, 227–228, agrees that *ʿnt* is a hypostatized element at Elephantine, but translates *ʿnt* as meaning "song." Surely Albright's suggestion is preferable.

[52]Porten, *Archives*, 179.

simply is not an important goddess in first millennium religion anywhere in the west Semitic world. Unlike the two other great goddesses of Canaan, Asherah and Astarte, Anat is not known as a goddess in the Hebrew Bible. Instead the theophoric element *ʿnt* occurs only in place names,[53] themselves almost always archaic survivals from the second millennium, and in a few personal names, the most famous of which, Shamgar Ben-Anat, also comes from the second millennium (Judg 5:6).[54] Similarly, Anat's role in the mythic lore of Sakkunyaton is minor; she is called only by the name of her Greek counterpart, Athena, with whom she is regularly identified (*KAI* 42), and appears in the *Phoenician History* only twice (*PE* 1.10.18, 33). In Phoenician and Punic material *ʿnt* only occasionally appears as a theophoric element in personal names.[55] Anat was not a major goddess anywhere (Egypt, Judah, Phoenicia) in the west Semitic world in the mid- to late first millennium.

Anat also lacks other qualifications we have identified as criteria for the Queen of Heaven. Nowhere is the offering of cakes specifically associated with her cult. She has no known astral features.[56] There is no

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[53]Anathoth (Josh 21:18; 1 Kgs 2:26; Jer 1:1; 11:21, 23; 32:7, 8, 9; Ezra 2:23 [= Neh 7:27]; Neh 11:32; 1 Chr 6:45), Bet-Anoth (Josh 15:59), and Bet-Anath (Josh 19:38, Judg 1:33).

[54]On the name Shamgar Ben-Anat (Judg 3:31; 5:6), see already W. F. Albright, "A Revision of Early Hebrew Chronology," *JPOS* 1 (1921), 55 and n. 1 on that page. Other *ʿnt* names in the Hebrew Bible are Anathoth (1 Chr 7:8; Neh 10:20), and Anthothiyah (1 Chr 8:24).

[55]F. L. Benz, *Personal Names in the Phoenician and Punic Inscriptions* (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1972), 382, identifies only seven Anat names in all the Phoenician and Punic corpus: *ʿbdʿnt* (occurs three times), *ʿbdʾnt* (occurs twice), *ʾnt*, and *ʾnthn*. The last three names have been spelled with *ʾālep* for **ʿayin* (see Benz, *Personal Names*, 203).

[56]J. McKay (*Religion in Judah*, 46) has argued that a "six-pointed star on the wall of one of the rooms of the temple of Anat at Megiddo" (see H. G. May and R. M. Engberg, *Material Remains of the Megiddo Cult* [The University of Chicago Oriental Institute Publications 26; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1935], 6–7) is evidence of Anat's astral character, but this is hardly conclusive. Why call the temple at Megiddo an Anat temple? A. Vincent's attempt (*La religion des Judéo-Araméens*, 627, 635) to demonstrate Anat's astral

evidence that women play a special role in the Anat cult. Anat, it is true, is given the title "Lady/Mistress of Heaven" in both Egypt and Canaan. But despite the fact that she is called *nbt pt* in New Kingdom texts and *bʿlt šmm rmm* at Late Bronze Age Ugarit, Anat would not seem to be the sixth-century Queen of Heaven of Jeremiah 7 and 44.

Astarte

The more promising west Semitic candidate for Jeremiah's Queen of Heaven is Astarte. Astarte is called *nbt pt*, "Lady of Heaven," in many New Kingdom texts. From the fourteenth century (Eighteenth Dynasty) comes a stone bowl of Horemheb's reign on which Astarte is called "Lady of Heaven."[57] A stele from Memphis dating from the time of Merneptah calls Astarte "Lady of Heaven, Mistress of all the Gods."[58] Pharaoh Siptah, at the end of the Nineteenth Dynasty, also names Astarte "Lady of Heaven" on a stele from Abu Simbel.[59]

Similarly in the first millennium Astarte bears the title Queen. On the obverse face of the Kition tariff inscription (*CIS* 86 A; *KAI* 37 A), which lists the monthly expenditures for the temple of Astarte at Kition, Astarte is referred to as *mlkt qdšt*, "the holy Queen" or "the Queen, the Holy One" (line 7),[60] and as *mlkt*, "the Queen" (line 10). Although one

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characteristics is also unconvincing.

[57]D. B. Redford, "New Light on the Asiatic Campaigning of Horemheb," *BASOR* 211 (1973), 37; the inscription is discussed by M. Delcor, "La culte de la 'Reine du Ciel' selon Jer 7, 18; 44, 17–19, 25 et ses survivances," *Von Kanaan bis Kerala* (AOAT 211; Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1982), 114.

[58]W. M. F. Petrie, *Memphis* 1 (London: School of Archaeology in Egypt and Bernard Quaritch, 1909), 19. The inscription is discussed by Delcor, "La culte de la 'Reine du Ciel,'" *Von Kanaan bis Kerala*, 114; Helck, *Beziehungen*, 458; J. Leclant, "Astarté à cheval," *Syria* 37 (1960), 10–13, and Fig. 1; Stadelmann, *Gottheiten*, 104.

[59]M. G. Maspero, "Notes de Voyage," *Annales du Service des antiquités de l'Égypte* 10 (1909), 131–132; the inscription is discussed by Helck, *Beziehungen*, 457, and Stadelmann, *Gottheiten*, 106.

[60]Following the line numbers of *KAI* and most commentators; on this issue, see J. B. Peckham, "Notes on a Fifth-Century Phoenician Inscription from

must admit that Astarte is not mentioned by name in lines 7 and 10, the title "queen" in this inscription, concerned as it is with the cult and temple of Astarte, can refer to no other.[61] Sakkunyaton also refers to Astarte's queenly role in first millennium religion. He describes her as the co-regent of King Zeus Demarous (= Baʿl Haddu) and remarks that she wears on her head a bull's head as an emblem of kingship (*basileias*; *PE* 1.10.31). Finally in connection with Astarte's royalty one thinks of the Tyrian "Throne of Astarte" and the uninscribed "thrones" like it.[62] There is also a possibility that in the Eshmunazor inscription (*KAI* 14), the phrase *rbtn hmlkt*, "our Lady, the Queen," (line 15) refers to Astarte. The syntax of the inscription is unclear, and the epithets "our Lady" and "the Queen" may be applied either to Astarte or to Amotashtart, the queen mother, mother of Eshmunazor.[63]

Astarte's association with the heavens, indicated already in the second millennium by the Egyptian *nbt pt*, "Lady of Heaven," continues in first millennium religion. In the Eshmunazor inscription (*KAI* 14) we read of *ʿštrt šmm ʾdrm*, "Astarte of the Highest Heavens" (line 16). As many commentators have pointed out, the phrase *šmm ʾdrm* (lines 16 and 17) refers to a precinct sacred to Astarte in Sidon.[64] In the Bodashtart

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Kition, Cyprus (*CIS* 86)," *Or* 37 (1968), 304, n. 2.

[61]As is acknowledged by almost all the commentators. See as representative J. C. L. Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions* 3 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), 128; J. P. Healey, "The Kition Tariffs and the Phoenician Cursive Series," *BASOR* 216 (1974), 55; O. Masson and M. Sznycer, *Recherches sur les phéniciens à Chypre* (Hautes Études Orientales 2/3; Genève et Paris: Librairie Droz, 1972), 44; Peckham, "Kition," *Or* 37 (1968), 312–313. The suggestion of H. Donner and W. Röllig (*KAI* 2, 55) that *mlkt* is a mistake for *mlʾkt*, "service," in line 7 (they do not comment on line 10) surely is not correct, as the scribe demonstrates in line 13 that he knows the proper spelling of *mlʾkt*, that is, with an *ʾālep*. See Masson and Sznycer, *Recherches*, 44.

[62]The "Throne of Astarte" inscription is *KAI* 17; for discussion of all the "thrones," see Milik, "Les papyrus araméens," *Bib* 48 (1967), 572, and the bibliography listed there.

[63]From further afield, note also Plutarch's reference to Queen Astarte (*Isis and Osiris* 15 [357 B]).

[64]See as representative Gibson, *Syrian Semitic Inscriptions* 3, 112; Milik,

inscription (*KAI* 15) the phrase *šmm rmm*, "the highest heavens," likely refers to the same precinct of Astarte.[65]

Elsewhere in the Mediterranean world Astarte's association with the heavens is suggested by her identification with Greek Aphrodite, the goddess of Venus, the Morning and Evening Star. This identification of Astarte with Aphrodite is made clear by Sakkunyaton, who writes, "the Phoenicians say that Astarte is Aphrodite" (*PE* 1.10.32),[66] and also by a fourth-century Greek/Phoenician bilingual, on which the Phoenician name *ʿbdʿštrt ʾšqlny*, "Abdʿaštart the Ashkelonite," is translated as *Aphrodisiou Askalōnitēs*, "Aphrodisios the Ashkelonite" (*KAI* 54). Notably, moreover, the Astarte or Aphrodite who was worshiped by Abdʿaštart and other Ashkelonites was *Aphroditē ourania*, Aphrodite of the Heavens; Herodotus (1.105)[67] and Pausanias (1.14.7) report the worship of *Aphroditē ourania* in Ashkelon. This identification of Astarte with Greek *Aphroditē ourania* is confirmed by a second-century inscription from Delos dedicated to *Astartę̄ palaistinę̄, Aphroditę̄ ouranią̄*, "Palestinian Astarte, that is, Aphrodite of the Heavens."[68]

More data comes from Pyrgi. The Pyrgi inscription, dedicated in its Phoenician version to Astarte, is in its Etruscan form dedicated to the

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"Les papyrus araméens," *Bib* 48 (1967), 561 and n. 2 on that page; J. Teixidor, *The Pagan God. Popular Religion in the Greco-Roman Near East* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1977), 39.

[65]See Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 142; Gibson, *Syrian Semitic Inscriptions* 3, 112; Milik, "Les papyrus araméens," *Bib* 48 (1967), 597–598; and, especially, O. Eissfeldt, "Schamemrumim 'Hoher Himmel,' ein Stadtteil von Gross-Sidon," *Ras Schamra und Sanchunjaton* (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1939), 62–67 (No. 14).

[66]Trans. H. W. Attridge and R. A. Oden, *Philo of Byblos. The Phoenician History. Introduction, Critical Text, Translation, and Notes* (CBQMS 9; Washington, D. C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1981), 55.

[67]Note also 1.131 and 3.8.

[68]See P. Roussel and M. Launey, *Inscriptions de Délos* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1937), #2305. Also see Delos inscription #1719 in Roussel and Launey and the discussions of Delcor, "La culte de la 'Reine du Ciel,'" *Von Kanaan bis Kerala*, 117; R. A. S. Macalister, *The Philistines, their History and Civilization* (London: Oxford University, 1914), 94; McKay, *Religion in Judah*, 51.

goddess Uni. J. Fitzmyer notes that Etruscan Uni is Roman Juno, and, significantly, that Uni is "closely associated" with *Juno caelestis*, "Juno of the Heavens," in Roman Africa.[69] The identification of Astarte with Juno, rather than with Etruscan *Turan*, Roman Venus, the usual equivalent of Greek Aphrodite, need not give pause, given the tremendous fluidity of the great Canaanite goddesses in the first millennium.

Finally, two pieces of evidence from early in the Common Era are significant. The first is found in Herodian (5.6.4), where it is reported that the Phoenicians call *Aphroditē ourania* (= Astarte) *astroarchē*, that is, "Queen of the Stars."[70] Moreover, in Apuleius (*Metamorphoses* 11.2) Caelestis Venus of Paphos is called *regina caeli*, "Queen of Heaven."[71] Latin *Caelestis Venus* is, of course, a simple translation of Greek *Aphroditē ourania*, whom we have identified with Palestinian Astarte.

In addition to the fact that Astarte in her epithets can be associated with the heavens, it is important to note that Astarte has other astral features.[72] In her iconography Astarte is symbolized by a star. Like Ištar, her Mesopotamian counterpart, and Greek Aphrodite, Astarte is identified with Venus, the Morning and Evening Star.[73] Sakkunyaton

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[69]Fitzmyer, "Pyrgi," *JAOS* 86 (1966), 288.

[70]Pointed out by Delcor, "La culte de la 'Reine du Ciel,'" *Von Kanaan bis Kerala*, 115.

[71]Pointed out by Teixidor, *The Pagan God*, 36. *RES* 921, which reads [ʿš]*trt pp*[*s*], confirms that the cult of Palestinian Astarte was known at Paphos. See A. Dupont-Sommer, "Les Phéniciens à Chypre," *Report of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus, 1974* (Nicosia: Department of Antiquities, Cyprus, and Zavallis, 1974), 93–94.

[72]In addition to the data cited below, see J. J. M. Roberts, *The Earliest Semitic Pantheon* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University, 1972), 101, n. 285.

[73]According to M. Dahood ("Ancient Semitic Deities in Syria and Palestine," *Le Antiche Divinità Semitiche* [ed. S. Moscati; Roma: Centro di Studi Semitici, 1958], 86), this identification of Astarte with Venus explains *CTA* 33.1, *k ʿtrb ʿaṯtrt*, which he translates "when Astarte sets." Surely, though, the root *ʿrb* here means "to enter"; cf. *Ugaritica* 5, 9, line 18 (RS 24.643), *k tʿrb ʿṯtrt šd bt mlk*,

also remarks on Astarte's astral associations (*PE* 1.10.31): "When traveling around the world, she [Astarte] discovered a star which had fallen from the sky. She took it and consecrated it in Tyre, the holy island."[74]

Another of the criteria we established at the beginning of our discussion was that the Queen of Heaven is a goddess associated especially with fertility and somewhat with war. Astarte is such a goddess.

At Ugarit Astarte plays the role of divine courtesan. This is particularly clear in *Ugaritica* 5, 2 (RS 24.252), where El sits enthroned at a royal banquet, flanked by Astarte, his lover, and Baʿl Haddu, his regent (see also *CTA* 14.3.146). Astarte's characterization as a goddess of sexual love continues in the mid- to late first millennium, as her identification with Greek Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love, indicates. In biblical Hebrew the noun *ʿaštārôt*, derived from the divine name *ʿaštart*, means "increase, progeny," another indication of Astarte's fertility functions. Also in Egypt Astarte is known as a goddess of fertility. Like Anat, she is called one of "the great goddesses who conceive but do not bear."[75]

Astarte's associations with war are, in general, not as well known as her character as a fertility goddess. The stele of Merneptah from Memphis which identifies Astarte as "Lady of Heaven" depicts the goddess with shield and spear.[76] Other Egyptian representations of

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"when Astarte of the Field enters the house of the king." However, I would suggest that a reference to Astarte as Venus is what lies behind an Egyptian New Kingdom text reported by J. B. Pritchard (*Palestinian Figurines*, 67–68), which reads "Astarte is to the rising."

[74]Trans. Attridge and Oden, *Philo of Byblos*, 55.

[75]See above, p. 16, n. 39, and the references listed there. Also on Astarte's place as a fertility goddess in Egypt, note the plaque of the composite goddess, Qudšu-Astarte-Anat, where the goddess holds a lotus and serpent, symbols of fertility. See I. E. S. Edwards, "A Relief of Qudshu-Astarte-Anath in the Winchester College Collection," *JNES* 14 (1955), 49–51.

[76]Petrie, *Memphis* 1, 8, and Pl. 15, No. 37. See also Leclant, "Astarté à cheval," *Syria* 37 (1960), 10–13, and Fig. 1.

Astarte show her on horseback carrying weapons of war.[77] Egyptian texts also describe her as a war goddess in both the second and first millennia. Thut-mose IV (Eighteenth Dynasty) is described as being mighty in the chariot like Astarte.[78] Like Anat, Astarte is called a shield to Pharaoh Ramesses III[79] and a part of a thirteenth-century king's war chariot.[80] In the second millennium she carries the epithet "Lady of Combat";[81] a Ptolemaic text describes her as "Astarte, Mistress of Horses, Lady of the Chariot."[82] In the Canaanite realm Astarte acts as a war goddess in concert with Ḥoran in Ugaritic mythology (*CTA* 2.1.7–8; 16.6.54–57). W. Herrmann has pointed out that the obverse of *PRU* 5, 1 (19.39), also describes Astarte as a war goddess.[83] Finally, note that the armor of the dead Saul is taken by the Philistines to the temple of Astarte (1 Sam 31:10), which may also indicate the goddess'

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[77]Especially see Leclant, "Astarté à cheval," *Syria* 37 (1960), *passim*; R. du Mesnil du Buisson, "Ashtart cavalière et armée dans le mythe de la planète Vénus," *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 45 (1969), 523–538, plus one plate. See also the "Lady Godiva" plaque found in D. Ussishkin's excavations at Lachish, which shows a goddess, Astarte, I would argue, standing astride a horse. See D. Ussishkin, "Excavations at Tel Lachish—1973–1977. Preliminary Report," *Tel Aviv* 5 (1978), 21, and Pl. 8; C. Clamer, "A Gold Plaque from Tel Lachish," *Levant* 7 (1980), 152–162.

[78]See H. Carter and P. E. Newberry, *The Tomb of Thoutmôsis IV* (Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire 15; Westminster: Archibald Constable and Co., 1904), 27 and Pl. 10; see also *ANET*, 250a and n. 16.

[79]Edgerton and Wilson, *Historical Records of Ramesses III*, 75. See also *ANET*, 250a and n. 18.

[80]Dawson and Peet, "Poem on the King's Chariot," *JEA* 19 (1933), 169 (verso, lines 12–14); see also *ANET*, 250a and n. 17.

[81]Leclant, "Astarté à cheval," *Syria* 37 (1960), 25.

[82]See Leclant, "Astarté à cheval," *Syria* 37 (1960), 54–58, especially p. 57, and Pl. 4 (opposite p. 49); also *ANET* 250a, n. 16.

[83]Herrmann, "Aštart," *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung* 15 (1969), 7–16. Although Herrmann is undoubtedly correct to stress the rather neglected war-like nature of Astarte, his view that we must reject the notion that she is a goddess of fertility (p. 45) goes too far.

associations with war.

Moreover, we have reason to believe that the cult of Astarte had as a crucial element the offering of cakes. Again the Kition Tariff inscription is noteworthy, for line 10 of that inscription reads: *lʾpm // ʾš ʾp ʾyt ṯnʾ ḥlt lmlkt*, "for the two bakers who baked the basket of cakes for the Queen."[84] As we have previously noted, the Queen must be Astarte.[85] In addition, W. Culican has drawn attention to a Hellenistic votive model found off the Phoenician coast.[86] The model shows six figures positioned around a domed object. Of the six figures, four are identical seated females; Culican identifies them as votaresses. Another female figure stands and is pregnant; Culican believes her to be the fertility goddess Astarte. This identification cannot be certain, but Astarte's well-attested popularity in the Phoenician and Punic realm in the late first millennium (see below), coupled with her known fertility attributes, makes Culican's hypothesis attractive. The sixth figure on the model is male, and Culican identifies him as a priest of the goddess. The domed object around which these six figures cluster is interpreted as a beehive oven. Culican proposes the scene is a cake-baking ritual in honor of Astarte. This is a speculative, but, in light of the Kition tariff inscription and Jer 7:18 and 44:19, an appealing suggestion.[87]

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[84]The Kition inscription is very difficult to read and any proposed interpretation must be considered tentative. For the reading and translation adopted here, see Peckham, "Kition," *Or* 37 (1968), 305–306. Peckham is followed by Gibson, *Syrian Semitic Inscriptions* 3, 124–125, and by Masson and Sznycer, *Recherches*, 26–27, 28–29. An alternative reconstruction is offered by Healey ("Kition," *BASOR* 216 [1974], 53), who reads *lʾpm // ʾš ʾp mntspʾ ḥlt lmlkt*, "For the two bakers, who baked choice food, loaves for the Queen." What is important for our purpose is that both translations attest to the place of special cakes or loaves in the cult of Queen Astarte.

[85]Among those who associate the reference to loaves in the Kition inscription with the worship of the Queen of Heaven, see Culican, "A Votive Model," *PEQ* 108 (1976), 122; Delcor, "La culte de la 'Reine du Ciel,'" *Von Kanaan bis Kerala*, 110–112; Peckham, "Kition," *Or* 37 (1968), 314–315, and n. 2 on p. 315.

[86]Culican, "A Votive Model," *PEQ* 108 (1976), *passim*.

[87]It has also been suggested that the representations of female figures holding

A final factor which suggests that the Queen of Heaven is Astarte is the popularity of the goddess Astarte in the Iron Age cult. The theophoric element *ʿštrt* occurs in literally hundreds of first millennium Phoenician and Punic names.[88] Likewise, the goddess' name appears in many Phoenician and Punic inscriptions, both inscriptions from the Phoenician mainland and from the Mediterranean world and North Africa. The inscription of Paalaštart from Memphis (*KAI* 48), in addition to other first millennium Egyptian material cited above, attests to the popularity of Astarte in Egypt. In Israel the Deuteronomists accuse the people of worshiping Astarte in Judg 2:13; 10:6; 1 Sam 7:4; 12:10; 1 Kgs 11:5, 33; and 2 Kgs 23:13.[89] Also in Sakkunyaton Astarte is an important goddess, a wife of Kronos (*PE* 1.10.22, 24) and, as we have noted, a co-regent with Zeus Demarous/Baʿl Haddu (*PE* 1.10.31). Before the discovery of the Ugaritic tablets, Astarte was considered the most important of the three great Canaanite goddesses. The Ras Shamra material may have caused us to rethink the place of Astarte in the religion of second millennium Ugarit.[90] Still, the assumption that

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rounded objects which are known from Iron Age Palestine should be identified as Queen Astarte holding cakes baked in her honor (for a catalogue of these figurines, see R. Amiran, "A Note on Figurines with 'Disks,'" *Eretz Israel* 8 [1967], 99–100 [Hebrew]; D. Hillers, "The Goddess with the Tambourine. Reflections on an Object from Taanach," *CTM* 41 [1970], 608, n. 5; McKay, *Religion in Judah*, 110, n. 18; Pritchard, *Palestinian Figurines*, Type 5 [#159–172]). But far more convincing is D. Hillers' analysis of these figures as goddesses holding tambourines. See Hillers, "Goddess with the Tambourine," *CTM* 41 (1970), 606–619.

[88]The theophoric element *mlkt*, "queen," is also quite frequent in Phoenician and Punic personal names. Given that Astarte is often called "Queen" in first millennium religion, it is probable that these *mlkt* names are also Astarte names, and that they further attest to the popularity of the Astarte cult in the Iron Age.

[89]The G, in addition, reads *Astartē* for MT *ʾăšērâ* in 2 Chr 15:16 and *Astartais* for MT *ʾăšērîm* in 2 Chr 24:18. In the case of 2 Chr 15:16, which describes how Maʿacah, the queen mother, made an abominable image for the goddess, the MT is clearly primitive.

[90]Although as many commentators have noted, the evidence of the ritual texts, the offering texts, and the pantheon lists suggests that Astarte's place in the actual cult was more important than the mythological materials might

Astarte was pre-eminent in first millennium Canaanite religion holds. She is thus a worthy candidate for the Queen of Heaven in Jeremiah 7 and 44.

Iŝtar

Certain elements of the worship of the Queen of Heaven, however, remain unexplained if we interpret the cult of the Queen of Heaven only as a cult of west Semitic Astarte. For example, the word used in Jer 7:18 and 44:19 for the cakes baked for the Queen, *kawwānîm*, is used nowhere in the extra-biblical materials which pertain to Astarte. Similarly, the biblical reference to baking cakes "in her image" (Jer 44:19) cannot be understood by reference to the data on west Semitic Astarte. Third, west Semitic evidence attests to no special role for women in the cult of Astarte. However, as we will see, these elements in the cult of the Queen of Heaven can be explained if we examine the cult of the east Semitic goddess, Iŝtar. Indeed, to anticipate somewhat, I will suggest below that the Queen of Heaven is to be identified as a syncretistic deity who incorporates in her character aspects of both west Semitic Astarte and east Semitic Iŝtar.

Certainly Iŝtar is a goddess who appropriately bears the title "Queen of Heaven." The Sumerian name of Iŝtar, Inanna, was interpreted by the Akkadians to mean "Queen of Heaven," *(N)IN.AN.NA(K)*, and this title is routinely rendered in Akkadian texts as *ŝarrat ŝamê*, "Queen of Heaven," or *bēlet ŝamê*, "Lady of Heaven."[91] Iŝtar is also called by the related epithets *ŝarrat ŝamê u kakkabāni*, "Queen of Heaven and the

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indicate.

[91]See O. Edzard, "Inanna, Iŝtar," in "Mesopotamien. Die Mythologie der Sumerer und Akkader," *Wörterbuch der Mythologie*, 81; A. Falkenstein, *Die Inschriften Gudeas von Lagas* 1, *Einleitung* (AnOr 30; Roma: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1966), 78–79; W. Helck, *Betrachtungen zur grossen Göttin und den ihr verbundenen Gottheiten* (Religion und Kultur der alten Mittelmeerwelt in Parallelforschungen 2; München und Wien: R. Oldenbourg, 1971), 73; M. Held, "Studies in Biblical Lexicography," *Eretz Israel* 16 (1982), 80, n. 24; S. N. Kramer, *The Sumerians: Their History, Culture, and Character* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1963), 153; F. Thureau-Dangin, *Lettres et Contrats* (Paris: Librairie orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1910), 61.

Stars," *šarrat šamê u erṣeti*, "Queen of Heaven and Earth," *bēlet šamê (u) erṣeti*, "Lady of Heaven and Earth," *etellet šamê (u) erṣetim*, "Sovereign of Heaven and Earth," and *malkat šamāmī u qaqqari*, "Ruler of Heaven and Earth."[92] Similarly in the west Ištar is known as "Lady of Heaven." A New Kingdom inscription from Memphis is dedicated to "Hurrian Astarte [= Ištar of Nineveh],[93] the Lady of Heaven, the Mistress of the Two Lands, the Mistress of all the Gods."[94] Ištar has other astral features in addition to her epithets.[95] In Mesopotamia, for example, Ištar is equated with Sumerian *DIL.BAT*, the Sumerian name of the planet Venus.[96]

Ištar is also a fertility goddess, as the cycle of stories of Dumuzi/Tammuz and Inanna/Ištar shows.[97] We might in particular note that the ancient identification of Ištar with the grain storehouse

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[92]K. Tallqvist, *Akkadische Götterepitheta* (StudOr 7; Helsinki: Societas Orientalis Fennica, 1938), 39, 64, 129, 239–240; cf. 333–334.

[93]See W. F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, 143, n. 88; F. M. Cross, "The Old Phoenician Inscription from Spain Dedicated to Hurrian Astarte," *HTR* 64 (1971), 192; W. Helck, *Beziehungen*, 459–460; idem, *Betrachtungen*, 213–216; R. Stadelmann, *Gottheiten*, 107.

[94]For this inscription, see E. von Bergmann, "Inschriftliche Denkmäler der Sammlung ägyptischer Alterthümer des österr. Kaiserhauses," *Receuil de travaux* 7 (1886), 196; also see the comments of Culican, "A Votive Model," *PEQ* 108 (1976), 122; H. Ranke, "Ištar als Heilgöttin in Ägypten," *Studies Presented to F. Ll. Griffith* (London: Oxford University, 1932), 412–418; Stadelmann, *Gottheiten*, 107; *ANET*, 250, n. 19. Also note a second Memphis inscription in which Hurrian Astarte (= Ištar of Nineveh) is called Lady of Heaven. See H. Madsen, "Zwei Inschriften in Kopenhagen," *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 41 (1904), 114, and the comments of Culican, "A Votive Model," *PEQ* 108 (1976), 122.

[95]See the discussion by O. Edzard in "Inanna, Ištar," in *Wörterbuch der Mythologie*, 85–86.

[96]So M. Dahood, "Ancient Semitic Deities," *Le Antiche Divinità Semitiche*, 85.

[97]Below, pp. 80–82 (Chapter 2). The discussion of T. Jacobsen, "Fourth Millennium Metaphors. The Gods as Providers: Dying Gods of Fertility," *The Treasures of Darkness* (New Haven and London: Yale University, 1976), 23–73, is also helpful.

demonstrates her role in guaranteeing continual prosperity and preventing famine. In Jer 44:17–18 the people, of course, claim that the worship of the Queen of Heaven brings food and prosperity and that to neglect the Queen means famine.

Ištar in addition has associations with war. In the Epilogue to the Code of Hammurapi Hammurapi calls Ištar "the lady of the battle and of the fight" (Col. 50 [Rs. 27], 92–93). Her powers on the battlefield are clearly indicated by the curse she is to inflict on Hammurapi's enemy (Col. 51 [Rs. 28], 2–23):

> May she shatter his weapon at the battle site. May she establish for him confusion (and) rioting. May she cause his warriors to fail. May she give the earth their blood to drink. May she pile up everywhere on the plain heaps of corpses from his army. May she not take pity. As for him, may she give him into the hands of his enemies. May she lead him, bound, to the land of his enemies!

The myth of Inanna and Ebeh also attests to Ištar's warring nature. Inanna describes her planned attack of the mountain Ebeh:[98]

> The long spear I shall hurl upon it,
> The throw-stick, the weapon, I shall direct against it,
> At its neighboring forests I shall strike up fire,
> At its . . . I shall set up the bronze ax.

Lexicographers generally agree that *kawwānîm*, the word used for the cakes baked for the Queen of Heaven in Jer 7:18 and 44:19, is a loan word from Akkadian *kamānu*, "cake."[99] In Akkadian texts *kamānu*

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[98]The translation is that of S. N. Kramer, *Sumerian Mythology. A Study of Spiritual and Literary Achievement in the Third Millennium B.C.* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1944), 83.

[99]See as representative *AHW* 1, 430a, s. v. *kamānu*; *HALAT* 2, 444a, b, s. v. *kawwān*; KB, 428a, s. v. *kawwān*. See also A. Jeremias, *Das Alte Testament im Lichte des Alten Orients* (3d ed.; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1916), 611–612; H. Zimmern, *Akkadische Fremdwörter* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1915), 38; and, most recently, Held, "Studies in Biblical Lexicography," *Eretz Israel* 16 (1982), 76–77. On the interchange between *m* and *w*, see S. Moscati, *An Introduction to the Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages: Phonology and*

cakes are often associated with the cult of Ištar. A hymn to Ištar reads as follows:[100]

> O Ištar, merciful goddess, I have come to visit you,
> I have prepared for you an offering, pure milk,
> a pure cake baked in ashes (*kamān tumri*),
> I stood up for you a vessel for libations,
> hear me and act favorably toward me!

Another text describes a healing ritual associated with the Ištar cult, in which a *kamān tumri*, a cake baked in ashes, is prepared in honor of the goddess.[101] Finally in Gilg 6.58–60 Gilgamesh describes to Ištar her love of Tammuz/Dumuzi:

> You loved the shepherd of the herd,
> who without ceasing heaped up ash-cakes (*tumri*) for you,
> who daily sacrificed kids to you.

Although *kamānu* cakes are not specifically mentioned in the Gilgamesh passage, most commentators assume that the reference to *tumru* is a shorthand expression for the *kamān tumri*, "cake baked in ashes," the cake associated with the Ištar cult in our first two examples.[102]

Morphology (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1964), 25–26.

[100]The text can be found in J. A. Craig, *Assyrian and Babylonian Religious Texts* 1 (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1895), 15:20–22. For transcription, translation, and notes, see E. Ebeling, "Quellen zur Kenntnis der babylonischen Religion, II," MVAG 23/2 (1918), 4, lines 20–22, and 12.

[101]The text can be found in E. Ebeling, *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts* 1 (Osnabrück: Otto Zeller, 1972), 42:25. For transcription, translation, and some notes, see Ebeling, "Quellen, II" MVAG 23/2 (1918), 22, line 25, and 27.

[102]So, for example, *AHW* 3, 1370b, s. v. *tumru(m)*; A. L. Oppenheim, "Mesopotamian Mythology II," *Or* 17 (1948), 36, n. 6; H. W. F. Saggs, *The Greatness that was Babylon* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1962), 395; A. Schott and W. von Soden, *Das Gilgamesch-Epos* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1977), 52; E. A. Speiser, "The Epic of Gilgamesh," in *ANET*, 84b. But cf. A. Heidel, *The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels* (Chicago: University of Chicago,

Scholars who have commented on the cult of the Queen of Heaven in Jeremiah are generally puzzled by the phrase "cakes in her image" (*lĕhaʿăṣībāh*). Those holding that the Queen of Heaven is Ištar often explain what "in her image" means by pointing to several clay molds found at Mari. These molds portray a nude female figure who holds her hands cupped under her breasts. Her hips are large and prominent.[103] It has been suggested that the molds represent Ištar and that they were used to shape cakes baked in the image of the goddess. These cakes were then offered to Ištar as part of her sacrificial cult.[104] Although there are problems with this suggestion,[105] the proposal to relate the Mari molds to biblical *lĕhaʿăṣībāh* is intriguing.

Finally, we observe that women seem to have a special place in the Ištar cult. In Mesopotamian mythology the largest complex of stories

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1946, 1949), 51, who translates "charcoals." Against Heidel's translation, see B. Landsberger, *Der Kultische Kalender der Babylonier und Assyrer* (Leipziger Semitistische Studien 6/1–2; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1915), 121, n. 1.

[103]The molds were first published by A. Parrot, *Mission archéologique de Mari* 2. *Le palais-documents et monuments* (Paris: Librairie orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1959), 37–38, and Pl. 19. For a readily accessible photograph of the largest and best-preserved mold, see A. Malamat, "Mari," *BA* 34 (1971), Fig. 9 (p. 21), or Pope, *Song*, Pl. 1 (opposite p. 360).

[104]This is proposed by Rast, "Cakes for the Queen of Heaven," *Scripture in History and Theology*, 171–174, and by Pope, *Song*, 379. See also the comments of Holladay, *Jeremiah* 1, 254.

[105]The molds found at Mari do not necessarily represent a goddess; even if it is a goddess, it is not necessarily Ištar. The excavator, A. Parrot, writes, "L'identification nous échappe: simple mortelle, femme de haut rang, divinité?" (*Le palais*, 37). J. B. Pritchard notes that Mesopotamian goddesses are usually represented as clothed, suggesting that the nude figure represented on the molds is not divine (*Palestinian Figurines*, 85–86). Certainly the woman does not wear the divine headdress characteristic of Mesopotamian goddesses. See E. Douglas van Buren, *Clay Figurines of Babylonia and Assyria* (New Haven: Yale University, 1930), l–lii, lxvii, and H. Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals* (London: Macmillan, 1939), 160. One notes, moreover, that the molds of the nude female were found among a large collection of molds decorated with either animal or geometric designs. The purpose of the animal and geometric molds seems to be decorative and mundane, not cultic, which may suggest that the entire assembly of molds belongs in the sphere of the secular, not the religious.

about Ištar deals with her courtship and marriage to the young fertility god Tammuz.[106] Tammuz symbolizes in the myths the spring season of prosperity and yield, a season when dates and grain were harvested, calves and lambs were born, and milk ran during the spring milking season. But when the spring harvest ended, the mythology perceived that the god Tammuz had died. The death of Tammuz was, of course, an occasion of sorrow for his young bride, Ištar, and Akkadian mythology preserves many of her laments over her dead lover.[107] What is crucial to note for our purposes is that as it is Ištar who mourns her dead lover in myth, so too is it women who ritually mourn the death of Tammuz in the Mesopotamian cult. This is vividly illustrated by Ezek 8:14, where it is women who are specifically identified as those who sit at the gate of the Jerusalem temple's inner court wailing over the death of the fertility god.

I suggest that this special role of women as ritual mourners over Tammuz provides a significant parallel to the biblical materials concerning the women who bake cakes for the Queen of Heaven. To be sure, the fact that women take responsibility for one aspect of the Ištar cult, the ritual mourning over Tammuz, need not imply that the Ištar cult in all its features is one with special appeal to women. But in fact the ritual mourning over Tammuz and the baking of cakes for Queen Ištar were by the ancients closely related. The *kamānu* cakes associated with the Ištar cult are, in Mesopotamia, a staple food of shepherds.[108]

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[106]For discussion of these myths, especially their agricultural concerns and their relation to ritual, see further Chapter 2, "Wailing over Tammuz" (pp. 80–82), and Jacobsen, *Treasures of Darkness*, 25–73.

[107]See, for example, the laments collected in Jacobsen, *Treasures of Darkness*, 49–50, 53–54.

[108]For examples of *kamānu* cakes as food of shepherds, see T. G. Pinches, "The Goddess Ištar in Assyro-Babylonian Literature," *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology* 31 (1909), 62, line 15 (the *kamānu* as the food of Dumuzi), and cf. Ebeling, *Keilschrifttexte* 57, r. 1, 12, and 357:35. Also see Ebeling, *Keilschrifttexte* 141, r. 8, and L. Cagni, *The Poem of Erra* (Sources from the Ancient Near East 1/3; Malibu: Undena Publications, 1977), 28, line 57, and note *CAD* K (vol. 8), 111a: "Baked in ashes, the *k.*-cake seems to have been a dish of the shepherd."

Tammuz is the prototypical and patron shepherd of Mesopotamia. Moreover, as we noted above, in the Gilgamesh epic Gilgamesh describes Tammuz as the one who heaps up ash cakes for his lover Ištar (Gilg 6.58–60). This suggests that traditions associated with Tammuz the shepherd are closely tied to the Ištar cult that involved the baking of offering cakes. Those who participate in these closely tied cultic traditions should then be the same worshipers. The women, that is, who play a crucial role in the ritual mourning over Tammuz also play an important role in the cult involving the baking of *kamānu* cakes.

I submit that the Queen of Heaven is a syncretistic deity whose character incorporates aspects of west Semitic Astarte and east Semitic Ištar. This syncretism probably occurred early in Canaanite religious history, well before the sixth century. As noted above, the people of Judah, in Jer 44:17, and Jeremiah himself, in Jer 44:21, describe the cult as one practiced by past generations. Moreover, we know that the cult of Ištar of Nineveh is attested in Egypt in the Late Bronze Age[109] and as far west as Spain by the eighth century B.C.E.[110] This would suggest that the cults of Astarte and Ištar were exposed to each other and began intermingling sometime during the last centuries of the second millennium. This syncretism then continued throughout the Iron Age. Indeed, the cult of the Queen of Heaven in the Iron Age prospered, attracting adherents in sixth-century Jerusalem and commanding a temple in fifth-century Egypt.

In the conflict between Jeremiah and the people over the worship of the Queen of Heaven we see evidence of two contrasting ideologies of cult that flourished in sixth-century Judah. The prophetic class to which Jeremiah belonged was fanatical in its devotion to Yahweh alone. Moreover, the Deuteronomists, with whom Jeremiah's theology was closely allied, were equally insistent on Yahweh's demands for an exclusive relationship with the people of Israel. Jeremiah, the Deuteronomists, and the other priests and prophets of the sixth century

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[109]See above, p. 29 and nn. 93–94; also Helck, *Beziehungen*, 458–460; idem, *Betrachtungen*, 213–216.

[110]See Cross, "Hurrian Astarte," *HTR* 64 (1971), 189–195.

had no place for religious cults in which the worship of Yahweh was supplemented with the worship of other gods and goddesses. Prophetic, priestly, and Deuteronomistic religion conservatively clung to one of the most ancient tenets of Yahwistic faith: "you shall not bow down before an alien god" (Exod 34:14).

The ideology of the people, on the other hand, involved incorporating many different religious practices into their worship. With these diversities, the people hoped, they would propitiate all aspects of divine power.[111] The people rejected the prophetic ideology of proscribed religious activity, where the worship of other gods is forbidden, in favor of an ideology of inclusiveness. This conflict between people and prophet over what activities can be included in the sphere of legitimate religious expression occurs in Jeremiah 7 and 44; as we will see, it characterizes as well the other texts of our study: Ezekiel 8, Isaiah 57, and Isaiah 65.

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[111]We should note that the term "people" is used somewhat broadly; if Jer 44:17 and 44:21 are to be taken at all seriously, then kings and princes are also counted among those who worship the Queen of Heaven. See M. Smith, "The Veracity of Ezekiel, the Sins of Manasseh, and Jeremiah 44 18," *ZAW* 87 (1975), 15.

2. "BUT YOU WILL SEE STILL GREATER ABOMINATIONS" EZEKIEL 8

In 592 B.C.E., at the midpoint between the two Babylonian invasions of 597 B.C.E. and 587 B.C.E., Ezekiel, who was exiled to Babylon after the first invasion, finds himself transported back to Jerusalem in a divine vision (Ezekiel 8–11). According to the text, Ezekiel sees Jerusalem in a state of religious and moral collapse, and his vision culminates with the departure of Yahweh from the defiled temple (Ezek 10:18–19; 11:22–23). Our interest is in the first part of this vision, Ezekiel 8, where God shows the prophet four strange manifestations of sixth-century popular religion: the image of jealousy, elders burning incense in a room of reliefs, women wailing over Tammuz, and men bowing down to the sun. The first two cults, the image of jealousy and the room of reliefs, are described enigmatically in the text, and much of our task will be to decipher these observances. The third and fourth rituals, women wailing over Tammuz and men bowing down to the sun, are clearer in their referents. Still, the place of the Tammuz cult and sun-worship in sixth-century Jerusalem must be discussed.

Ezek 8:1–17 reads as follows:

> (1) In the sixth year, in the sixth[1] month, on the fifth day of the

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[1]The G reads *en tō pemptō mēni*, "in the fifth month," that is, in August, 592 B.C.E.; the MT dates the oracle to September, 592 B.C.E. Some modern scholars (W. Eichrodt, *Ezekiel* [Old Testament Library; London: SCM, 1970], 108, n. a; G. Fohrer, *Die Hauptprobleme des Buches Ezechiel* [BZAW 72; Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1952], 116), following an older generation of commentators, assume that the G is primitive and that the Hebrew text has been intentionally changed to make the date in Ezek 8:1 consistent with Ezek 1:1–2; 3:16; and 4:5, 9. If the seven days mentioned in 3:16 and the three hundred and

month, as I was sitting in my house with the elders of Judah sitting before me, the hand of Yahweh[2] fell[3] upon me.[4] (2) And I looked, and there was an image[5] of a man:[6] from his loins[7] down was fire, and from his loins up was like the gleam of electrum.[8] (3) And he

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ninety days mentioned in 4:5, 9, are added to July 31, 593 B.C.E., the date of Ezekiel's inaugural oracle according to Ezek 1:1–2, a date late in August, 592 B.C.E., is reached. In the Masoretic chronology Ezekiel, his first oracles behind him, is then ready, a few weeks later, in September, 592 B.C.E., to receive the visions of the temple in Jerusalem. The G tradition, however, has the temple visions occurring before Ezekiel finishes his three hundred and ninety day sign act; Eichrodt and Fohrer thus label the G, with its chronological ambiguities, the *lectio difficilior* and designate it as original. But, as is frequently noted (most recently by W. Zimmerli, (*Ezekiel* 1 [Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979], 216, n. a on v 1), correct arithmetic would add to July 31, 593, seven days (Ezek 3:16) plus three hundred and ninety days (Ezek 4:5, 9) plus forty days (Ezek 4:6). The resulting date postdates both the G and Masoretic traditions in Ezek 8:1; the readings *pemptō mēni*, "fifth month," and *šty*, "sixth month," are thus equally difficult chronologically.

[2]Reading *yd yhwh* with the G and with Ezek 1:3; 3:14, 22; 33:22; 37:1; 40:1. The *ʾdny* of MT *yd ʾdny yhwh* is an expansionistic plus. See further W. Zimmerli, "Appendix 1," *Ezekiel* 2 (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 556.

[3]G *kai egeneto* reflects Hebrew *wattĕhî*, as in Ezek 1:3 and 3:22, or Hebrew *hāyĕtâ*, as in Ezek 33:22; 37:1; 40:1. MT *wattippōl* is to be retained as *lectio difficilior*; cf. Ezek 11:5 (*wattippō ʿālay rūaḥ yahweh*).

[4]MT *šm* is, on the basis of the G, deleted as an explicating plus; see also Ezek 1:3 and 3:22, where MT *šm* is not reflected in the G.

[5]Reading simply *dmwt*, omitting MT *kmrʾh* with the G.

[6]MT reads *ʾēš*; G reads *andros* (<*ʾîš). Already in 1857 A. Geiger (*Urschrift und Uebersetzungen der Bibel in ihrer Anhängigkeit von der innern Entwicklung des Judenthums* [Breslau: Julius Hainauer, 1857], 343) posited that the original reading was *ʾîš* (cf. Ezek 1:26) and that the Hebrew text had been altered out of reverence for the divine appearance. It is less likely that Masoretic *ʾēš* is an anticipation of the *ʾēš* in the next part of the verse (so M. Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20* [AB 22; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983], 166) or simply a mistake (so Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 108, n. c).

[7]Reading *mmtnyw* with the G, for the expansionistic MT *mmrʾh mtnyw*.

[8]MT reads *kmrʾh zhr kʿyn hḥšmlh*, G *hōs horasis ēlektrou*. Most probably the

sent forth a likeness of a hand, and he took me by a tuft of my hair, and a wind bore me between earth and heaven and brought me in a divine vision[9] to Jerusalem, to the entrance of the gate[10] which faces north, where the throne[11] of the image of jealousy was.[12] (4) [ ][13]

G reflects Hebrew **kʿyn hḥšmlh*, as it does in Ezek 1:4 (see also 1:22, where *horasis* translates Hebrew *ʿyn*). This short reading is secondarily expanded in the Masoretic tradition.

The etymology and translation of *ḥšml* is debated. Akkadian *ḫašmānu*, "a bluish stone," Akkadian *ešmaru*, "white gold, electrum," Akkadian *elmeštu*, "some kind of costly, yellowish stone" (*AHW* 1, 205a) or "brass" (G. R. Driver, "Ezekiel's Inaugural Vision," *VT* 1 [1951], 61), Elamite *ismalu*, "metal inlay," and Egyptian *ḥsmn*, "bronze," have all been suggested. G and Vg translate *ēlektron* and *electrum* respectively. Here, I have followed the ancient versions and translated "electrum," but note that this is not definite. See further, in addition to the standard lexicons, Driver, "Ezekiel's Inaugural Vision," *VT* 1 (1951), 60–62; W. A. Irwin, "Hashmal," *VT* 2 (1952), 169–170.

The unexpected *hē* on the end of *ḥašmal* (cf. Ezek 1:4, 27) remains unexplained. Gesenius (GKC, 90f) takes it as a meaningless appendage. Greenberg (*Ezekiel 1–20*, 166) suggests the form arose by assimilation to *lĕmaʿlâ*. G. Hölscher (*Hesekiel, der Dichter und das Buch* [BZAW 39; Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1924], 69) finds here an Aramaic ending.

[9]Reading the singular with the versions for the MT plural *marʾôt* (*pace* Zimmerli [*Ezekiel* 1, 217, n. b on v 3] and J. W. Wevers [*Ezekiel* (New Century Bible; London: Nelson, 1969), 79], who, without argumentation, insist that the plural is to be retained).

[10]MT *hpnymyt* is absent in the G, which suggests it is secondary. Moreover, the lack of agreement in the MT between the feminine *hpnymyt* and the masculine *pōneh* indicates textual confusion. MT *hpnymyt* is best deleted, and *šʿr* emended to *hšʿr*. The implication of this emendation is that Ezekiel finds himself not at the northern gate of the Jerusalem temple, but at the northern gate of Jerusalem's city walls. See further below, pp. 53–55.

[11]Hebrew *môšab* is not directly attested in the G. The Vg reads *statutum* and the Tg *mwtb*. Among moderns, Zimmerli (*Ezekiel* 1, 217) reads "position," which is nonsensical, E. Vogt (*Untersuchungen zum Buch Ezechiel* [AnBib 95; Rome: Biblical Institute, 1981], 43) translates "location," the *RSV* translates neutrally "seat," and others (e. g., *JB*, *NEB*, Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 164) gloss over *môšab*. But surely what is meant by *môšab* is a throne, dais, or pedestal on which an image (*semel*) of a deity sits. *môšab* clearly refers to the throne of a god in its other occurrence in Ezekiel, Ezek 28:2. In that oracle the king of Tyre, who proclaims "I am a god" (*ʾēl ʾānî*), aspires to the divine throne (*môšab*

(5) And he [Yahweh] said to me, "Son of man, lift your eyes to the north." And I lifted my eyes to the north, and there, north of the gate,[14] in the entrance,[15] was the altar[16] of this image of jealousy. (6)

ʾĕlōhîm) located on the cosmic mountain. In Hebrew tradition the language describing the ark, which was the throne or palladium of Yahweh, also uses the root *yšb*: note the liturgical name *ʾărôn bĕrît yahweh ṣĕbāʾôt yōšēb kĕrūbîm*, "the Ark of the Covenant of Yahweh of Hosts who sits enthroned on the cherubim" (1 Sam 4:4; cf. 2 Sam 6:2; 2 Kgs 19:15 [= Isa 37:16]; Ps 80:2; 99:1; 1 Chr 13:6). Note too the use of the root *yšb* in Ps 132:13–14 and in 2 Sam 7:5, *ha-ʾattâ tibneh lî bayit lĕšibî*, "will you indeed build for me a temple for my enthronement?" Also significant is the new Aramaic stele from Taymāʾ, which describes a throne (*kursēʾ*) set up as a dais or pedestal (*mytb*) for the statues of Sngl[ʾ] and ʾAsimāʾ, "the gods of Taymāʾ" (lines 5–6). See F. M. Cross, "A New Aramaic Stele from Taymāʾ," *CBQ* 48 (1986), 387–394. Finally, for *môšab*, "throne," in non-divine contexts, see 1 Sam 20:25 (throne of Saul) and *CTA* 16.5.24 (thrones of the sons of Kirta; note the parallel, *kḥṭ*). Cf. 1 Kgs 10:19 (= 2 Chr 9:18), *šebet* (throne of Solomon).

[12]There has been no agreement among either ancient or modern commentators on how to interpret the *crux sml hqnʾh hmqnh*. The initial problem is whether to read the root *qnʾ* or *qnh*. The G takes *qnh* as the original reading, translating *hē stēlē tou ktōmenou*; similarly some Latin manuscripts translate *lapis titulus ipsius possidentis*. But other ancient witnesses (Tg and Vg) read the root *qnʾ*, and this interpretation is followed by most moderns. But even if we agree to read *qnʾ*, there is still debate concerning the repetition of the root. Here, I have taken *hmqnh* as a gloss on *hqnʾh*; alternatively we could explain *hqnʾh* and *hmqnh* as ancient variants. See also GKC, 75qq.

[13]As is commonly acknowledged, Ezek 8:4, "And behold, the glory of the God of Israel [G: "the glory of Yahweh, God of Israel"] was there, like the vision that I saw in the plain," is a clumsy gloss. The verse awkwardly breaks apart what was originally a continuous description in 8:3 and 8:5 of Ezekiel's encounter with the image of jealousy. The purpose of the addition was an attempt at harmonization: in Ezek 8:5–17 Yahweh speaks directly to Ezekiel, yet in 8:1–3 it is not explicitly stated that God is present. Some editor felt it necessary to assert that God was there during the vision. The intrusive v 4 is the result.

[14]It has long been recognized that MT, *miṣṣāpôn lĕšaʿar hammizbēaḥ*, "north of the altar gate," is unsatisfactory. Nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible is an altar gate mentioned. More important, as it stands in the MT v 5 adds nothing to what little we have already learned in v 3 about the nature of the "image of jealousy." To emend the MT to *miṣṣāpôn laššaʿar mizbaḥ*, "north of the gate

And he said to me, "Son of man, do you see what they[17] are doing? They[18] are doing great abominations here in order to distance themselves[19] from my sanctuary. But you will see still greater abominations."

(7) And he brought me to the entrance of the courtyard, and I looked, and there was a hole in the wall. (8) And he said to me, "Son

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was the altar of . . . " (as has been advocated most recently by Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 1, 218, n. a on v 5; by Vogt, *Ezechiel*, 43; and by Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 108, n. h), solves both these problems. The reference to the unknown altar gate is excised, and the altar instead is associated with the image of jealousy, revealing to us new information about the image, namely, that it had as part of its apparatus an altar and thus a sacrificial cult. Note how the demonstrative pronoun *zeh*, which dangles awkwardly in the grammar of the MT, makes perfect sense in the emended text.

G. R. Driver, advocating the same translation as advanced here, has alternatively repointed the MT to *miṣṣāpôn lĕša'arâ mizbaḥ*, with otiose *hē* after *lĕ*, as in Ps 9:18, *liš'ôlâ*; note also *'el-haṣṣāpônâ* in v 14 (see GKC, 90e). Such an emendation, Driver argues, does less violence to the consonantal text (G. R. Driver, "Linguistic and Textual Problems: Ezekiel," *Bib* 19 [1938], 62).

[15]Although not in the G, the *hapax legomena bi'â* is surely to be retained as original, omitted by a G translator who failed to understand the word.

[16]The G reads here *epi tēn pylēn tēn pros anatolas*, reflecting Hebrew *š'r mzrḥ*, "east gate." But MT is emphatic in its stress on the direction "north" (mentioned once in v 3, three times in v 5, and again in v 14), and it is thus impossible to consider "east" as an original reading. G has simply misread Hebrew *mzbḥ*. (On reading *mzbḥ*, "altar," in construct, see n. 14.)

[17]Reading *mh hm* with the *Qere'*, for *Kĕtîb mhm*.

[18]MT *'šr byt yśr'l* is lacking in the G; delete as an expansionistic plus.

[19]MT *lrḥqh m'l*. There has been some confusion as to whether God or the people is the subject of *lrḥqh*. If God is the subject, the translation reads something like, "in order that I (Yahweh) must distance myself from my sanctuary." This would anticipate the departure of Yahweh's *kābōd* from the temple in Ezek 10:18–19; 11:22–23. But, as discussed most extensively by Greenberg (*Ezekiel 1–20*, 168–169), *rāḥaq mē'al* always has as its subject humanity when the actors involved are God and humans. See, for example, in the writings of Ezekiel Ezek 44:10: "But the Levites, who distanced themselves from me (*rāḥăqû mē'ālay*) when Israel strayed, who strayed after their idols, they will bear their punishment." In 8:6, similarly, it is the people who have withdrawn from Yahweh's temple.

of man, dig into the wall." And I dug into the wall, and there was an opening.[20] (9) And he said to me, "Enter, and see the abominations[21]

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[20]Ezek 8:7b–8 has caused no little confusion, both among ancient and modern commentators. In these verses Ezekiel is being led to some chamber situated in the vicinity of the courtyard entrance. But how Ezekiel gains access to that chamber is not at all obvious. As it stands, the MT suggests that Ezekiel's attention is first drawn to a hole in the wall. He is commanded to dig in the wall around the hole (enlarging the hole to squeeze through it? So G. R. Driver, "Ezekiel: Linguistic and Textual Problems," *Bib* 35 [1954], 149–150.) Eventually he succeeds in revealing(?) creating(?) a door or entrance in the wall through which he can enter the secret room. The room, presumably, is built either into or abutting onto the wall of the courtyard. The G tradition is hardly any easier than the Hebrew. The G text omits *wʾrʾh whnh ḥr ʾḥd bqyr* in v 7b and *bqyr* twice in v 8. This might suggest that the chamber is subterranean, perhaps underneath the paving of the courtyard entrance. Still, the G, like the MT, insists that Ezekiel dug his way into the chamber.

Some modern scholars (e. g., Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 108, n. 1; G. Fohrer, *Ezechiel* [HAT 13; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1955], 49) emend *ḥtr* in v 8 to *ḥpr*, which means both "to dig" and "to look carefully." Ezekiel was brought, in v 7, to the entrance of the courtyard and commanded, in v 8, to look carefully (*ḥpr*), at which point he saw the concealed entrance to the secret chamber. Both the Hebrew and G traditions failed to interpret *ḥpr* correctly and instead took the verb to mean "dig." Subsequently, in the Hebrew tradition, *ḥtr*, a synonym of *ḥpr*, made its way into the text; likewise, the G translates *oryssō*, "to dig." Once the verb was misunderstood, various glosses (*wʾrʾh whnh ḥr ʾḥd bqyr* [v 7]; *bqyr* [v 8]) worked their way into the text. This is an ingenious, perhaps overly ingenious, solution. It yields a smooth and easily comprehensible text, but without textual support, it ultimately must be rejected in favor of the *lectio difficilior* of the MT. Also, until we understand better what was originally intended in vv 7b–8, we cannot decide whether the pluses in the MT are secondary (on *bqyr*, see n. 24).

Taking the MT as primary, I have tentatively suggested in my translation that Ezekiel's vision begins with Ezekiel outside the palace courtyard. Ezekiel breaks through a casemate wall which surrounds the palace/temple complex and finds himself in a room inside the casemate wall. This room was probably part of a house which was attached to the inside of the wall. Ezekiel crosses the casemate room, passes through an opening, and finds himself in a house where seventy elders participate in some ritual activity. This is discussed extensively below, pp. 67–69.

[21]MT *htwʿbwt hrʿwt*. The adjective *hrʿwt* is deleted with the G as an explicating plus; in Ezek 6:11 G also omits *rʿwt* for MT *twʿbwt rʿwt*. See too

which they are doing here." (10) And I entered, and I looked, and there was every kind of unclean food[22] and all of the idols of the house of Israel were engraved[23] round about on the wall.[24] (11) And seventy men from among the elders of the house of Israel (including Jaazaniah son of Shaphan)[25] were worshiping[26] before them, and

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8:17.

[22]MT *whnh kl tbnyt rmś wbhmh šqṣ*. The phrase *tbnyt rmś wbhmh* is lacking in the G and is almost universally considered a gloss. For the resulting **whnh kl šqṣ*, the G reads *idou mataia bdelygmata. mataia* is strange; C. H. Cornill (*Das Buch des Propheten Ezechiel* [Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1886], 224) in 1886 suggested that it results from an inner-Greek corruption of *panta ta* (= Hebrew *kl*). Although such a corruption is not immediately apparent, we must agree with Cornill that *mataia* as it stands is unlikely (see also G. A. Cooke, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel* [ICC 21; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1951], 102; Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 1, 219, n. a on v 10). G *bdelygmata* might suggest reading *šiqqūṣîm* for MT *šeqeṣ*. But I prefer to retain MT *šeqeṣ*; on this, and on the translation of *šeqeṣ* as "unclean food," see below, pp. 69–71.

[23]MT *měḥuqqeh*, singular, requires a singular subject, instead of MT *kl glwly byt yśr'l*. Many thus with no textual basis delete *kl glwly byt yśr'l* as a gloss. But if v 10 is to be read as singular, the plural *lipnêhem* in v 11, which refers back to v 10, must also be emended. Zimmerli (*Ezekiel* 1, 219, n. b on v 10) prefers to retain MT and, following A. B. Ehrlich (*Randglossen zur hebräischen Bibel* 5 [Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1912], 26), to read *měḥuqqeh* as a noun (as in 1 Kgs 6:35 and Ezek 23:14), regarding *měḥuqqeh* as a nominal predicate.

[24]G reads *ep' autou* for MT *'l ḥqyr*. This is the fourth time the word *qyr* occurs in the Hebrew of Ezekiel 8; in none of these instances has the word been reflected in the G. It is difficult to explain all of the occurrences of Hebrew *qyr* as glosses; one suspects, rather, that the Greek translator did not understand the word.

[25]Some have been tempted to delete MT *wy'znyhw bn špn 'md btwkm* as an addition. The phrase breaks the flow of the Hebrew in v 11. Jaazaniah is not one of the known sons of the Shaphan who held high office during the reign of Josiah (Jer 26:24; 29:3; 36:10–12). That there is another Jaazaniah, the son of Azzur, in Ezek 11:1, suggests some inner-Hebrew corruption. In the G the initial *w*, "and," and the verb *'md* are lacking, also indicating some difficulty in the Hebrew original. But as we shall see, the presence of Jaazaniah in v 11 fits well with the interpretation of vv 7–13 which I propose below (pp. 67–77). Moreover, there is no textual basis for deleting *wy'znyhw bn špn 'md btwkm*. I thus prefer to leave it in the text.

each held his censer in his hand, and the scent of incense[27] rose. (12) And he said to me, "Son of man, do you see what the elders of the house of Israel are doing,[28] each in his room[29] of reliefs,[30] for they say, 'Yahweh does not see;[31] Yahweh has forsaken the land.'" (13) And he said to me, "But you will see still greater abominations which they do."

(14) And he brought me to the entrance of the north[32] gate of the temple of Yahweh, and there were women[33] sitting there, wailing over Tammuz. (15) And he said to me, "Son of man, do you see? But you will see still greater abominations than these."

(16) And he brought me to the inner courtyard of the temple of Yahweh and at the entrance to the temple of Yahweh, between the porch and the altar, there were about twenty[34] men, with their backs

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[26]*ʿāmad lipnê* is a technical term meaning "to stand in cultic service," "to worship." See Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 1, 220, n b on v 11.

[27]MT reads *ʿtr ʿnn ḥqṭrt*; delete *ʿnn* with the G.

[28]MT *bḥšk*, "in the dark," is not reflected in the G and should be deleted as a gloss.

[29]Reading the singular *ḥdr* with the versions for the MT plural.

[30]MT *mśkyt* is variously understood by the versions. G translates *kryptos*, "secret," which is also reflected by Syriac *ksyʾ* and by Latin *in abscondito cubiculi sui*. The Tg reads *mškb*. Surely, however, the versions all misunderstand the Hebrew *maśkīt*, which certainly means "relief," as it does in Lev 26:1 and Num 33:52 (*ʾbn mśkyt*). Note also *KAI* 215.18 (Panamu II), where *mšky* means "image" or "statue." There is thus no need to emend on the basis of the versions, nor is there any basis for restoring, as does Eichrodt (*Ezekiel*, 108, n. r), following A. Bertholet (*Das Buch Hesekiel* [Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament 12; Freiburg, Tübingen, und Leipzig: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1897], 48), *bōḥēr bĕmaskītō*, "while each chooses an idol for himself."

[31]MT *ʾtnw* is lacking in the G here and in the Hebrew of the parallel version of this formulation in Ezek 9:9.

[32]On MT *ʾel-haṣṣāpônâ* see n. 14.

[33]MT *hnšym*; the article is deleted with the G. Zimmerli (*Ezekiel* 1, 221, n. b on v 14), wishing to do less violence to the consonantal text, proposes redividing MT *šm hnšym* as *šmh nšym*.

[34]MT reads "twenty-five," G "twenty." It is easiest to explain MT as a secondary assimilation to 11:1, where twenty-five men are mentioned.

toward the temple of Yahweh and their faces toward the east, bowing down[35] to the sun.[36] (17) And he said to me, "Son of man, do you see? Is it such a trifling thing for the house of Judah to do the abominations which they do here? [ ][37, 38] Behold, they extend . . . to my nose.[39] (18) Therefore I will surely act with wrath. My eye will

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[35]MT *mštḥwytm* must be a mistake for *mštḥwym*.

[36]MT *qdmh lšmš*; this second *qdmh* lacks in the G and is superfluous.

[37]Although there is no textual basis, it is tempting to delete MT *ky ml'w 't h'rṣ ḥms*, "for they fill the land with violence." Verse 17 is best interpreted as a look backward at all four cultic observances which the prophet has envisioned; certainly, the catchword, *tw'bwt*, which occurs in v 17a, suggests this. And, if v 17 does in fact refer back to the cultic behaviors which Ezekiel has witnessed, then a reference to the sin of filling the land with violence is inappropriate and breaks the movement of the vision. Moreover, *ky ml'w 't h'rṣ ḥms* awkwardly interrupts the syntax of v 17.

[38]MT *wyšbw lhk'sny* is lacking in the G and is to be deleted. Zimmerli (*Ezekiel* 1, 221–222, n. b on v 17) notes in support of the deletion that the Hiphil of *k's* with the meaning "to provoke Yahweh" is very common in the writings of the Deuteronomistic school but is almost wholly absent in the book of Ezekiel.

[39]MT *whnm šlḥym 't-hzmwrh 'l 'pm* is an ancient *crux*. To solve, we first emend *'pm* to *'py*. MT *'pm* is a *tiqqūn sōpĕrîm*, an emendation of the scribes, introduced out of reverence for the deity. But this does not eliminate the problem, for there is no consensus on the meaning of *zmwrh*.

C. C. Torrey (*Pseudo-Ezekiel and the Original Prophecy* [Yale Oriental Series, Researches 18; New Haven: Yale University, 1930], 84) related *hazzĕmôrâ*, which means branch elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, to Persian *baresma* or *barsom*, a bunch of twigs used in Persian sun-worship. In the Persian rite worshipers held the *baresma* or *barsom* to their noses. Torrey saw in Ezek 8:17 an allusion to this same rite. In an analysis similar to Torrey's H. W. F. Saggs ("The Branch to the Nose," *JTS* 11 [1960], 318–329) suggested that Ezek 8:17 reflects a Babylonian rite, in which worshipers of a fertility deity approach the deity holding either a hand or a baton-shaped object of some kind in front of their noses as a gesture of reverence. Saggs connected the ritual gesture of reverence made in front of the fertility deity with the worship of the sun in v 16, since "the sun-god in Mesopotamia, in particular the beneficent sun of early morning, had a fertility aspect" (p. 329). But against Torrey and Saggs, we must note again that the nose in question is not the worshiper's, but Yahweh's (Saggs' attempts [pp. 318–319] to analyze *'py* as a plural or a dual

not spare; I will not have pity. "[ ][40]

According to Ezek 8:1, this oracle dates from 592 B.C.E.[41] The religious behaviors Ezekiel claims to see in Jerusalem and in the temple thus clearly fall within the scope of our study, Judahite popular religion in the sixth-century. Yet some scholars have argued that the cult acts condemned in Ezekiel 8 belong not to the sixth century, but to an earlier era in Judah's history. If so, Ezekiel 8 would be disqualified from our consideration. Thus before turning to an analysis of the religious

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without mimation fail to convince). Moreover, v 17 does not continue the description of sun-worship found in v 16, but rather is to be taken as a climactic peroration referring back to all of Ezekiel 8. See n. 37 and also R. Gordis, "'The Branch to the Nose.' A Note on Ezekiel VIII 17," *JTS* 37 (1936), 284–286. G. Fohrer's (*Ezechiel*, 52) analysis of "the branch to my nose" as an Egyptian rite, where plants were held up to the rising sun, takes into account the reading *ʾpy*, but fails to see v 17 as distinct from v 16. N. Sarna ("Ezekiel 8:17: A Fresh Examination," *HTR* 57 [1964], 347–352) analyzes *zmwrh* as < **dmr*, which is possible, but Sarna's overall analysis of v 17 is hardly compelling. Equally unconvincing are attempts to interpret *zmwrh* as a phallic symbol and ancient understandings of *zmwrh* as "stench," for which there is no etymological basis.

Amid such confusion, *zmwrh*, I think, must be left untranslated. But even if we do not understand the specific connotation of *zmwrh*, a basic understanding of **šlḥym ʾt hzmwrh ʾl ʾpy* is possible. Surely the phrase is an idiom which describes rage or anger, in this case, Yahweh's anger at the cults Ezekiel has envisioned in vv 1–16. *zmwrh* in this analysis would be some kind of a provoking agent which irritates Yahweh's nose. Perhaps the Hebrew idiom is best understood by drawing on an English counterpart: the people and their behaviors are to Yahweh, "a thorn in my side."

[40]MT *wyqrʾ bʾzny qwl gdwl wlʾ ʾšmʿ ʾwtm* is lacking in the G and is to be deleted as a secondary addition, formulated on the basis of Ezek 9:1 ("And he cried in my ears with a loud voice, saying . . . ").

[41]There has been some debate on the reliability of Ezekiel's date formulas. The most radical view would take all the notices of date in Ezekiel as secondary editorial additions. This view especially prevailed a generation or more ago. Contemporary scholars, however, are more inclined to take Ezekiel's dates seriously, and this approach is the one followed here. Certainly, as will be argued below, it is possible and even probable that the religious practices Ezekiel claims to have seen in his temple vision in Ezekiel 8 were going on in Jerusalem in 592 B.C.E.

observances against which Ezekiel protests, we must ask whether it is really possible that in 592 B.C.E. Jerusalem and the temple housed the cults Ezekiel describes seeing there.

In 1930 C. C. Torrey published *Pseudo-Ezekiel and the Original Prophecy*, in which he proposed that Ezekiel, while claiming to be set in Judah during the reign of Manasseh, was actually a pseudepigraphic work from the Hellenistic period. (The references to the Babylonian exile, according to Torrey, were added by a later editor.)[42] While as a whole this theory was immediately rejected by scholars,[43] M. Greenberg has recently argued that some of the issues Torrey raised still nag. "The lasting merit of Torrey's work is to have delineated the problems so forcefully that no one could ever ignore them afterward."[44] In the case of Ezekiel 8 Greenberg, drawing on the work of Y. Kaufmann, asks whether Torrey was not correct in positing that the religious situation described fits the time of Manasseh better than it does the year 592 B.C.E. Kaufmann[45] and Greenberg[46] insist that the reform of Josiah was successful and enduring, that is, that in post-Josianic Judah public, royally sponsored cults other than a "purified" cult of Yahweh did not exist. Thus Ezekiel could not have seen the cultic activities he claims were practiced in Jerusalem in 592 B.C.E. Rather, he must be describing forms of religious expression which

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[42]Torrey, *Pseudo-Ezekiel*, 58–112.

[43]A complete summary of the responses to Torrey can be found in M. Greenberg, "Prolegomenon," in the Ktav reprint of *Pseudo-Ezekiel and the Original Prophecy* (The Library of Biblical Studies; New York: Ktav, 1970), xv–xviii. Although somewhat dated, the survey of C. G. Howie (*The Date and Composition of Ezekiel* [JBL Monograph Series 4; Philadelphia: Society of Biblical Literature, 1950], *passim*) is useful. See also W. A. Irwin, "Ezekiel Research since 1943," *VT* 3 (1953), 54–66; H. H. Rowley, "The Book of Ezekiel in Modern Study," *BJRL* 36 (1953), 146–190.

[44]M. Greenberg, "Prolegomenon," *Pseudo-Ezekiel*, xxix.

[45]Y. Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel. From its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile* (trans. and abridged M. Greenberg; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1960), 406–409.

[46]Greenberg, "Prolegomenon," *Pseudo-Ezekiel*, xxii–xxiii; idem, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 202.

thrived during the reign of Manasseh. "Ghosts of that time rise before his eyes."[47]

Kaufmann and Greenberg find evidence that the reform of Josiah was lasting in the second book of Kings, which they argue knows of no revival of any pre-Josianic cultic activities. Kaufmann in particular maintains that the fact that 2 Kings does not indicate that any *bāmôt* were rebuilt after Josiah's death is telling, since the worship at *bāmôt* inside and outside Jerusalem was a heinous sin in the eyes of the Deuteronomists. Had such worship been resumed after Josiah's reform, according to Kaufmann, the Deuteronomistic historians could not have been silent about it.[48] Moreover, the fact that the exilic editors of the Deuteronomistic history laid the blame for the fall of Judah and Jerusalem on Manasseh is deemed significant: this must indicate that none of the post-Josianic kings, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiakin, and Zedekiah, engaged in what were to the Deuteronomists cultic abominations.

Contemporary with the last chapters of 2 Kings is the book of Jeremiah. Kaufmann, followed by Greenberg, argues that like 2 Kings, Jeremiah presents a picture of a royal and temple cult which had adhered to the Josianic reform. Of course, as we saw in the previous chapter, Jeremiah does describe "idolatrous" cult acts, such as the worship of the Queen of Heaven, in Jerusalem. But, according to Kaufmann and Greenberg, these were private, family cults. Jeremiah in his visits to the temple never describes it as desecrated or defiled; in Jeremiah's prophecies against Jehoiakim the prophet does not criticize the king for religious apostasy. Similarly, Lamentations fails to mention violations of the Josianic reform. Again Kaufmann, followed by Greenberg, concludes that in the arena of public worship, the Josianic reform was a permanent success.[49]

But can we accept this evaluation of 2 Kings and Jeremiah? In the case of 2 Kings, we should note that the exilic editors of the

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[47]Kaufmann, *Religion of Israel*, 430.

[48]Kaufmann, *Religion of Israel*, 406.

[49]Kaufmann, *Religion of Israel*, 406–409 (see also p. 144); Greenberg, "Prolegomenon," *Pseudo-Ezekiel*, xxii–xxiii; idem, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 202.

Deuteronomistic history (Dtr_2),[50] who bring the work up to date during the Babylonian captivity, had to explain not only the fall of Jerusalem in 587 but also the senseless death of Josiah, the David *redivivus*, in 609 B.C.E. It was chronologically impossible to place the blame for the death of Josiah on any post-Josianic king: a pre-Josianic ruler had to be held responsible. Manasseh, Josiah's idolatrous predecessor, was the obvious candidate, and he was consequently blamed for the twin evils, the death of Josiah and the fall of Jerusalem.[51] Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiakin, and Zedekiah are thus not spared from the Deuteronomistic condemnation for religious apostasy because they are blameless. They are only spared because to blame Judah's troubles on these kings would not have served both of the exilic Deuteronomists' needs.

Indeed, 2 Kgs 23:26–25:30 demonstrates that the Josianic reform did not last among Josiah's successors. G. Fohrer has noted that in these verses the four post-Josianic kings are accused of "doing evil in the eyes of Yahweh." In the Deuteronomistic history "to do evil in the eyes of Yahweh" is stereotypical language used to condemn kings of Israel and Judah. The phrase normally implies what was to the Deuteronomists religious apostasy, as it does when describing Solomon's worship of Astarte and Milkom (1 Kgs 11:5–6), Rehoboam's allowing the *bāmôt* sanctuaries to flourish (1 Kgs 14:22–23), and the cultic activities of Manasseh and his son Amon (2 Kgs 21:2, 6, 16, 20).[52] In the North the kings who continue to promote the worship of Yahweh at Jeroboam's shrines at Bethel and Dan are also condemned as

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[50]On the two editions of the Deuteronomistic history, one from the time of Josiah (Dtr_1) and one from the period of the exile (Dtr_2), see F. M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic. Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1973), 274–289, especially 285–289.

[51]For a similar, although not identical, analysis, see M. Smith, "The Veracity of Ezekiel, the Sins of Manasseh, and Jeremiah 44 18," *ZAW* 87 (1975), 14. Smith points out that Amon, Josiah's immediate predecessor, only ruled two years and thus was hardly likely to have been chosen as the one responsible for Josiah's death and the fall of Jerusalem. Manasseh, "the last considerable king before Josiah," was the more promising choice.

[52]See also 2 Kgs 8:18, 27.

"doing evil in the eyes of Yahweh."[53] Thus, as Fohrer points out, when the phrase "to do evil in the eyes of Yahweh" is used of Jehoahaz (2 Kgs 23:32), Jehoiakim (2 Kgs 23:37), Jehoiakin (2 Kgs 24:9), and Zedekiah (2 Kgs 24:19), it implies that like Solomon, Rehoboam, Manasseh, Amon, and all the kings of Israel they committed what was in the eyes of the Deuteronomists religious apostasy, that is, they allowed the reforms of Josiah to lapse.[54] Fohrer also remarks that Jehoiakim reversed Josiah's political policy, his anti-Egyptian stance, in favor of a pro-Egyptian policy and argues that consistent with this, Jehoiakim would have reversed Josiah's religious policy as well.[55]

Jeremiah, like the exilic Deuteronomists, felt no great admiration for the post-Josianic kings (see, e. g., Jer 22:10–30; 36:27–31). Kaufmann and Greenberg are correct in stating that Jeremiah does not specifically attack these kings for religious apostasy. But Jeremiah does imply that the religious activities of post-Josianic Judah are not all that those whose adhered to Josiah's reform might wish. Jeremiah does indicate, *contra* Kaufmann and Greenberg, that the temple was defiled (Jer 7:30; 32:34). Moreover, that a list of condemned religious behaviors (the worship of the Queen of Heaven, reliance on sacrifice and offerings without true faithfulness, child sacrifice, and the worship of astronomical bodies) is appended to the temple sermon (Jer 7:1–8:3) shows that at least in some editor's mind the temple cult and religious "apostasy" could be associated. Jer 44:17, 21 imply that the cult of the Queen of Heaven was a part of the religion of the monarchy; it may therefore have been a part of the religion of the monarch's private chapel, the temple. Similarly, the host of heaven was worshiped on the rooftops of the people and on the rooftops of the palace (Jer 19:13); the participation of the monarchy again may implicate the temple cult. Elsewhere in Jerusalem, outside the temple complex, the Tophet, the site of child sacrifice destroyed by Josiah (2 Kgs 23:10), was rebuilt

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[53]1 Kgs 15:26, 34; 16:19, 25, 30; 21:20, 25–26; 22:53; 2 Kgs 3:2; 13:2, 11; 14:24; 15:9, 18, 24, 28; 17:2. See also 2 Kgs 17:17.

[54]Certainly the Chronicler interprets the reign of Zedekiah as religiously apostate; see 2 Chr 36:14.

[55]Fohrer, *Die Hauptprobleme*, 168–170.

and thrived (Jer 7:30–34; 19:1–13; 32:35). The *bāmôt* sanctuaries also were re-established, and worship resumed there (Jer 13:27; 17:1–4). The Sabbath law was violated (Jer 17:19–27). Surely all these data do not suggest that the Josianic reform endured in Jerusalem. Rather, the argument that Josiah's reform permanently "purified" the public, temple cult of Yahweh seems flawed. I see no reason to ignore Ezek 8:1 and redate Ezekiel 8 to the time of Manasseh. The cultic activities in Jerusalem and in the temple that Ezekiel "saw" in 592 B.C.E. certainly belong to a description of the sixth-century religion of Judah.[56]

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[56]Archaeological evidence from the Iron Age border fortress of Arad supports this thesis. At Arad the excavator, Y. Aharoni, discovered an Iron Age temple and identified five stages in the temple's history. Aharoni analyzed these stages as representing (1) a functioning temple with a sacrificial cult, (2) a functioning temple in which no burnt offerings were made, and (3) a destroyed temple. Aharoni dated these three stages to (1) the tenth through eighth century, (2) the early and mid-seventh century, and (3) the last two decades of the seventh century. He further identified the lack of a sacrificial cult in Stage 2 with Hezekiah's reforms and the destroyed temple in Stage 3 with the reforms of Josiah. See especially Y. Aharoni, "Arad: Its Inscriptions and Temple," *BA* 31 (1968), 18–32; idem, "The Israelite Sanctuary at Arad," *New Directions in Biblical Archaeology* (ed. D. N. Freedman and J. C. Greenfield; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971), 35–43. Aharoni concluded, "Arad seems to elucidate the two stages in the centralization of worship carried out by Hezekiah and Josiah, respectively" ("Arad," *BA* 31 [1968], 26). But, as many scholars have pointed out (Y. Yadin, "A Note on the Stratigraphy of Arad," *IEJ* 15 [1965], 180; C. Nylander, "A Note on the Stonecutting and Masonry of Tel Arad," *IEJ* 17 [1967], 56–59; A. Mazar and E. Netzer, "On the Israelite Fortress at Arad," *BASOR* 263 [1986], 87–91), the wall built over the destroyed Stage 3 temple is not, as Aharoni thought, late seventh century, but rather is at least from the Persian period and possibly is even later. This calls into question Aharoni's supposition that the Arad temple was destroyed as a result of the Josianic reform and also raises doubts about the overall efficacy of Josiah's religious purge.

A corrected dating of other of Aharoni's evidence has in a like manner called into question the efficacy of Hezekiah's reform, at least at Arad. Two inscribed offering bowls dated by Aharoni to the ninth century have been redated, on the basis of their script, to c. 650 B.C.E. by F. M. Cross ("Two Offering Dishes with Phoenician Inscriptions from the Sanctuary of ʿARAD," *BASOR* 235 [1979], 75–78). Cross' dating would imply that offerings were made in the Arad sanctuary in the post-Hezekian period. In Arad, then, it seems that neither

What is still unclear about these four cultic activities, however, is their relationship to one another. There have been several attempts in the literature to see in the religious behaviors described in Ezekiel 8 four component parts of one ritual complex. W. Zimmerli notes that already in 1843 H. A. C. Haevernick suggested that the four cult practices shown to Ezekiel were four parts of a celebration for Adonis, the dying and rising god.[57] Almost one hundred years later, H. G. May, drawing on the work of J. Morgenstern[58] and F. J. Hollis,[59] also found in Ezekiel 8 four components of one celebration; in May's analysis the festival was held at the end of the summer solstice and climaxed with the departure of Yahweh from the temple.[60] The work of Morgenstern and May has influenced the recent study of M. Nobile,[61] who relates the cultic acts in Ezekiel 8 to an old solar and agricultural ceremony, held in the fifth month of the year,[62] the month of *ʾāb*. Nobile believes that this festival, in the Second Temple period, evolved into the historical festival, Tisha bʾAb, which commemorates the destruction of the temple

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Hezekiah's nor Josiah's reforms had substantial impact.

[57]W. Zimmerli, (*Ezekiel* 1, 237) cites H. A. C. Haevernick, *Commentar über den Propheten Ezechiel* (Erlangen: C. Heyder, 1843). I have been unable to examine Haevernick's commentary.

[58]J. Morgenstern, "The Book of the Covenant," *HUCA* 5 (1928), 1–151; idem, "The Gates of Righteousness," *HUCA* 6 (1929), 1–37. See also idem, "Two Ancient Israelite Agricultural Festivals," *JQR* 8 (1917), 31–54.

[59]F. J. Hollis, "The Sun Cult and the Temple at Jerusalem," *Myth and Ritual. Essays on the Myth and Ritual of the Hebrews in relation to the Culture Pattern of the Ancient East* (ed. S. H. Hooke; London: Oxford University, 1933), 87–110.

[60]See most completely H. G. May, "The Departure of the Glory of Yahweh," *JBL* 56 (1937), 309–321; also idem, "Some Aspects of Solar Worship at Jerusalem," *ZAW* 55 (1937), 269–281; idem, "The Book of Ezekiel: Introduction and Exegesis," *IB* 6 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1956), 108–110 (on Ezek 8:14–17), 117 (on 10:19), 122–123 (on 11:22–25).

[61]M. Nobile, "Lo sfondo cultuale di Ez 8–11," *Anton* 58 (1983), 185–200.

[62]In Ezek 8:1 Nobile reads "fifth month" with the G for MT "sixth month." See n. 1.

(Zech 7:5; 8:19). Finally, T. H. Gaster has found in Ezekiel 8 a description of four rites associated with a harvest festival. The same rites, Gaster argues, are found in *CTA* 23, which he identifies as a Canaanite cultic libretto enacted at an agricultural festival.[63]

Gaster's analysis has been thoroughly refuted by W. F. Albright,[64] and the reconstructions of May and Nobile similarly fail to convince. Most telling is the "disjointed, catalogue quality of the idolatries witnessed by the prophet."[65] This implies that the four religious observances of Ezekiel 8 are not related cult acts. Also suggestive are the locations where Ezekiel saw each of the four, for the various manifestations of popular religion are found scattered throughout Jerusalem. Again, four independent rituals are implied.

However this latter datum, the locations of the four condemned behaviors, is not immediately obvious, for on this issue the versions do not agree. The Masoretic tradition seems to locate all four cults within the temple compound, while in the Greek tradition Ezekiel moves from the northern boundary of Jerusalem to the temple's inner court. The Greek tradition, as we will see, is surely the more reliable.

In v 3 of the Masoretic tradition Ezekiel sees the image of jealousy at *petaḥ šaʿar happĕnîmît*, usually translated "at the entrance of the gate of the inner (court)"; "court" is supplied as necessary for the sense. If the "inner court" is in fact what is meant, Ezekiel envisions himself in the walled courtyard in front of the temple (1 Kgs 6:36; 7:12; Ezek 10:3; 44:17, 21, 27; 45:19; 46:1). Ezek 8:5 tells us that the prophet, standing in the inner court, looks northward out of the gate and sees the image of jealousy standing without. Next in the Masoretic text (v 7)

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[63]T. H. Gaster, "Ezekiel and the Mysteries," *JBL* 60 (1941), 289–310; see also idem, "A Canaanite Ritual Drama: The Spring Festival at Ugarit," *JAOS* 66 (1946), 49–76; idem, *Thespis* (2d ed.; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1961), 47–48; idem, *Myth, Legend, and Custom in the Old Testament* (New York and Evanston: Harper and Row, 1969), 607–611.

[64]W. F. Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1942), 165–168.

[65]M. Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion: Assyria, Judah and Israel in the Eighth and Seventh Centuries B.C.E.* (SBLMS 19; Missoula, MT: Scholars, 1974), 86, n. 116.

Ezekiel encounters a room of reliefs at the "entrance of the courtyard" (*petaḥ heḥāṣēr*). Which of the courtyards of the temple/palace complex v 7 refers to is not specified. Since the inner court is not mentioned by name, one suspects that Ezekiel has left the inner court and gone to the great encircling court which surrounded both temple and palace (1 Kgs 7:12).[66] In v 14 Ezekiel finds himself back at the inner court, just outside its northern entrance (*petaḥ ša'ar bêt yahweh 'ăšer 'el haṣṣāpônâ*). There he sees the women wailing over Tammuz. Finally, in v 16, he again enters the inner court of the temple, where he finds men worshiping the sun.

The mention in v 16 of the temple (*hêkāl*), the vestibule (*'ûlām*), and the altar (*mizbēaḥ*) leaves no doubt that the locus of the final cult act of Ezekiel's vision is the temple's inner court. But an attempt to trace Ezekiel's previous movements yields unsatisfactory results. The MT presumes that Ezekiel begins his visions in the inner court of the temple (v 3), then leaves (v 7) and works his way back, pausing outside the north gate of the inner courtyard (v 14) before re-entering the inner court. This, however, is hardly a logical path to have followed. Moreover, Ezek 8:6, which refers to the worship of the image of jealousy, reads, "they are doing great abominations here in order to distance themselves from my sanctuary." But this idea that the worshipers are far from the temple makes no sense if we envision the image of jealousy at the north gate of the temple's inner court. Also, when Ezekiel was in the inner court the first time, in v 3, he did not see the worship of the sun which we know, from v 16, was going on; similarly, when he looked out of the inner court through its northern gate, in v 5, he saw the image of jealousy but failed to see or hear the women who were sitting outside the northern gate of the inner court, wailing over Tammuz (v 14)! All these data suggest textual confusion in the MT.

Far more satisfactory is the Greek tradition. The G omits in v 3 *pnymyt*, the word usually translated as "inner (court)." This makes v 3

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[66]Note, however, Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 169, who interprets the location in v 7 as "perhaps the south opening of the north gate, that gave onto the inner court."

more syntactically satisfying, as it is no longer necessary to supply "court" for the sense.[67] More important, the logic of the G is more credible. If the MT is emended to agree with the G, Ezekiel first finds himself at the northern gate of Jerusalem's city walls. From there he goes to the gate which leads into the great court which surrounds both temple and palace (v 7), then to the northern entrance of the inner court of the temple (v 14), and finally into the inner court (v 16). Ezekiel thus moves from the city's perimeter to its heart. At the same time, he moves from secular space to locations that are progressively more sacred. Ezekiel mirrors this movement from secular to sacred space by moving from what he considers less reprehensible to more abominable cultic activities. Indeed, after Ezekiel views each "abomination," God tells the prophet exactly this: "You will see *still greater* abominations" (vv 6b, 13, and 15b). I conclude that Ezekiel 8 is a carefully crafted oracle, designed to climax at the temple with a vision of what the prophet feels is the worst possible of all religious abominations. There worshipers, in an act of ultimate contempt, literally turn their backs on Yahweh as they face away from his temple in order to worship another god.

The Image of Jealousy

Ezekiel's vision of Judahite popular religion thus begins at the north gate of Jerusalem's city walls. There Ezekiel sees the *semel haqqin'â* traditionally translated "the image of jealousy," and its altar (Ezek 8:3, 5).

W. F. Albright believed that the word *semel* referred to a stele or orthostat which had cultic or mythological scenes carved or painted upon it. These carved and painted slabs were either set into a wall or leaned against it; in the case of Ezek 8:3, 5, Albright felt the *semel* was placed in a niche in the wall, the *môšab* of v 3. To support his theory, Albright cited twelfth- to seventh-century parallels from northern Syria, northern Mesopotamia, and southeast Asia Minor.[68] Albright concluded, "The 'figured slab' of Ezekiel thus unmistakably suggests

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[67]The G reading also improves the grammar of v 3; see n. 10.

[68]Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, 165–166 and 221, n. 121.

Syro-Assyrian practice and cannot be squared with Egyptian, Phoenician, or Babylonian usage in any period."[69]

But I would disagree. There is west Semitic evidence for the word *semel*, and that evidence suggests not a figured slab, but rather a statue or a free-standing image. In Phoenician *sml* means "statue." Perhaps the most vivid example is the inscription of Azitawadda from Karatepe (*KAI* 26), where the statue of Baal which Azitawadda erected is twice called a *sml* in the inscription on the statue's base (C.4.15, 19). Similarly, two statuettes of the second century are inscribed with the words *smlm šnm ʾl ytn ʿb[d*], "ʿAb[d] gave these two statues . . . "[70] A *smlt* was erected (*ṯnʾ*) in honor of Astarte at Kition in 325 B.C.E. (*KAI* 33); also in the fourth century a *sml* dedicated to Reshef-Helios (Apollo) was erected, *ṯnʾ* (*KAI* 41). Surely the verb *ṯnʾ* used of the *smlt* of Astarte and the *sml* of Reshef-Helios indicates that the objects in question are to be understood as statues of the deities. Indeed, the Greek translation of *sml* in the bilingual *KAI* 41 is *a(n)dria(n)tan*, "statue."[71]

The word *semel* also means "statue," "image," or even "idol" in biblical Hebrew. The word occurs five times in the Hebrew Bible, twice in Ezekiel 8 (vv 3, 5); in 2 Chr 33:7, 15; and in Deut 4:16. Deut 4:16 is most telling. There the Israelites are forbidden to make for themselves *pesel tĕmûnat kol-semel*, "an image, a likeness of any idol." *tĕmûnat kol-semel* is to be read in parallel to *pesel*.[72] And, as the word *pesel* refers to some kind of free-standing statue carved from wood or stone (Isa 40:20; 44:15, 17; 45:20) or cast from metal (Judg 17:3, 4; Hab 2:18), so too must *tĕmûnat kol-semel* refer to some kind of wood, stone, or metal statue.[73] Similarly, in 2 Chr 33:7 the Chronicler replaces 2 Kgs

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[69]Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, 166.

[70]M. Lidzbarski, *Ephemeris für semitische Epigraphik* 2 (Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1908), 161. This reference is pointed out by Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 1, 239, n. 24.

[71]See also *KAI* 12.3, *sml bʿl*, "statue of Baal."

[72]See also Exod 20:4; Deut 4:23, 25; 5:8, where *pesel* parallels *tĕmûnâ*.

[73]Note again Lidzbarski, *Ephemeris* 2, 161, where the two *smlm* are made of marble (i. e., stone); *KAI* 33, where it is clearly stated that the *smlt* of Astarte was made of bronze (i. e., metal); and see also *KAI* 43.2, 14, where it is implied

21:7, *pesel hāʾăšērâ*, "the image of the *ʾăšērâ*," with *pesel hassemel*, "the image of the idol." Again, as *hāʾăšērâ* refers to a free-standing statue, the cultic representation of the goddess Asherah, in 2 Kgs 21:7, so too must *semel* refer to her statue in 2 Chr 33:7. This is confirmed in 2 Chr 33:15, where the Chronicler, referring back to 33:7, uses *hassemel* alone to designate the *ʾăšērâ*.

But what sort of a statue is a *semel haqqinʾâ*? An ancient scribe, in a gloss on Ezek 8:3, understood *semel haqqinʾâ* as meaning "image of jealousy" and suggested that an "image of jealousy" is a statue which provokes jealousy (*hmqnh*).[74] Among moderns, some have ignored the scribal gloss and interpreted *qnʾ* as "lapis lazuli" in the light of Ugaritic *iqnu*, Akkadian *uqnû*, "lapis lazuli."[75] The image, these scholars believe, is carved out of semi-precious stone. Others, also ignoring the gloss, interpret *qnʾ* as meaning "lust" or "passion."[76] To these scholars, the "image of lust" is a fertility figurine. But I agree with the glossator, thus reading "image of jealousy." The one whose jealousy is provoked is surely Yahweh.

The tradition of Yahweh as a jealous god who demands an exclusive relationship with Israel is one of the oldest in the Hebrew Bible. *ʾēl qannāʾ*, a liturgical name of Yahweh, occurs in an archaic torso of the Yahwistic decalogue found in Exod 34:14. There we read, "you shall not bow down before an alien god," *ky yhwh qnʾ šmw ʾl qnʾ hwʾ*. D. N. Freedman has argued that in this ancient cultic confession *yhwh* retains its original verbal force. Freedman translates, "for 'The Zealous One

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that a *sml* is made of silver (the text, unfortunately, is broken).

[74]On reading *mqnh* as a gloss in v 3, see above, n. 12.

[75]So Driver, "Linguistic and Textual Problems," *Bib* 35 (1954), 149; R. Dussaud, "L'idole de la jalousie," *Syria* 21 (1941), 359–360; Ch. Virolleaud, "Sur l'idole de la jalousie du temple de Jerusalem," *Revue des études sémitiques et babyloniaca*, 1942–45, Fasc. 1, 59–63.

[76]So *NEB* (see further the commentary of K. W. Carley, *The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel* [The Cambridge Bible Commentary; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1974], 51–53); Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 122; P. C. Craigie, *Ezekiel* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983), 57.

(*qannā'*) Creates' is his name; he is the Zealous God (*'ēl qannā'*)."[77] Alternatively we could translate "for Yahweh, whose name is Jealous (or Zealous), is the Jealous (or Zealous) God."[78] With either translation, what is important to note is the archaic, probably Mosaic, tradition of Yahweh's jealousy.[79]

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[77]D. N. Freedman, "The Name of the God of Moses," *JBL* 79 (1960), 155; see further on the verbal force of *yhwh* W. F. Albright, "Contributions to Biblical Archaeology and Philology," *JBL* 43 (1924), 370–378; idem, "Review of *L'épithète divine Jahvé Ṣĕbā'ôt: Étude philologique, historique et exégétique*, by B. N. Wambacq, O. Praem.," *JBL* 67 (1948), 379–380; idem, *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (2d ed.; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1957), 259–261; and, especially, F. M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 61–75.

[78]The root meaning of *qn'* is "ardor, zeal, passion." It is used both to express love and wrath. When used of Yahweh, it carries connotations both of Yahweh's zealous love for Israel and of Yahweh's jealous demand that Israel's relationship with him be an exclusive one.

[79]The name El Qanna' is further found in the cultic decalogue in Exod 20:5 and in its parallel formulation in Deut 5:9; like Exod 34:14 both these decalogues have their roots in the earliest expressions of Yahwistic faith. El Qanna' also occurs with a slightly different vocalization (*'ēl qannô'*) in the story of Joshua's covenant renewal ceremony in tribal Israel (Josh 24:19). Although Joshua 24 is extensively reworked, the presence of the liturgical name *'ēl qannā'* in the archaic covenant traditions of Exod 20:1–17; 34:14; and Deut 5:6–21 suggests that the name is perfectly appropriate in the original liturgy of the League cult at Shechem. Deuteronomy 32, one of Israel's early poems, also contains notice of Yahweh's jealousy (Deut 32:16, 21).

There is some debate about the date of Deuteronomy 32. An eleventh-century date has been advocated by O. Eissfeldt (*Das Lied Moses Deuteronomium 32:1–43 und das Lehrgedicht Asaphs Psalm 78 samt einer Analyse der Umgebung des Mose-Liedes* [Berichte über die Verhandlungen der sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig; Philologische-historische Klasse 104/5; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1958], 26–41) and by W. F. Albright ("Some Remarks on the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy XXXII," *VT* 9 [1959], 339–346; *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan. A Historical Analysis of Two Contrasting Faiths* [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1968], 17–19). Despite Eissfeldt's and Albright's arguments, F. M. Cross (*Canaanite Myth*, 264, n. 193) prefers a ninth-century date. The issue is not one which need concern us. Whether eleventh or ninth century, the poem is early.

The traditions about Yahweh's jealousy persist in later materials. In the book of Ezekiel the term *qn'* sometimes carries positive connotations, referring to Yahweh's zealous love for and passionate relationship with the people Israel (Ezek 38:19; 39:25). But more often in Ezekiel *qn'* refers to Yahweh's jealous anger, his impassioned wrath turned against Israel for her violations of the covenantal relationship between Yahweh and people. Oholibah/Judah is told by Yahweh in Ezek 23:25: "I will set my jealousy against you." Similarly Jerusalem is condemned: "I will set upon you the blood of wrath and jealousy" (Ezek 16:38; cf. 16:42). Finally, note this prophecy (Ezek 5:12–13):

> A third of you shall die by plague and be consumed by famine in your midst; a third shall fall by the sword round about you; and a third I will scatter to all the winds, and I will unsheath the sword after them. My anger shall spend itself, and I will vent my fury on them and satisfy myself; and they shall know that I, Yahweh, have spoken in my jealousy, when I spend my fury upon them.

The early materials suggest that the covenantal violation which provokes Yahweh's jealous anger is the making and worship of graven images. In the Decalogue, in both Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5, the parenthetic statement "for I, Yahweh your God, am a jealous God" is appended to the second commandment, which forbids the people to make and to worship graven images. In Deut 32:21, as in Exod 20:4–6 and Deut 5:8–10, Yahweh's jealousy is provoked by graven images:

> They have stirred me to jealousy with what is no god,
> They have provoked me with their idols.

Similarly, we read in Ps 78:58:[80]

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[80]Psalm 78 has been dated by W. F. Albright (*Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, 17, n. 41; 25–26; 90, n. 95; 155; 212, n. 12) and O. Eissfeldt (*Das Lied Moses*, 26–41) to the period of the United Monarchy; the psalm is thus roughly contemporary with Deuteronomy 32 (above, n. 79). On the date of Psalm 78, see further Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 134, n. 77.

> They provoked him with their *bāmôt* sanctuaries,
> With their graven images they made him jealous.

In later tradition the notion that it is the making and worshiping of graven images which provokes Yahweh to jealousy continues. 1 Kgs 14:22–23 reads:

> And Judah did evil in the sight of Yahweh, and they provoked him to jealousy with their sins which they committed, more than all their fathers had done. They also built for themselves *bāmôt* sanctuaries, and pillars, and Asherim on every high hill and under every green tree.

Even more noteworthy is Deut 4:23–24, written by Ezekiel's contemporaries, the exilic Deuteronomists:

> Beware, lest you forget the covenant of Yahweh your God, which he made with you, and make a graven image, a likeness of anything about which Yahweh your God has commanded you. For Yahweh your God is a devouring fire, he is a jealous God.

This tradition, that Yahweh is made jealous when the people make graven images and worship them, has led commentators to the fairly obvious conclusion that Ezekiel's "image of jealousy" is an image of some god. And, certainly, the altar associated with the image of jealousy in v 5 is evidence that the image is being worshiped. Which god, however, does the image depict? One of the earliest interpretations is that of the Chronicler, who, as noted above, calls Manasseh's *ʾăšērâ* a *pesel hassemel*. This would indicate that Ezekiel's image of jealousy was an *ʾăšerâ*. There is a problem with this assumption: presumably the Chronicler believes that the *ʾăšērâ* destroyed by Josiah was re-erected in its old place in the temple after the reforms of Josiah lapsed in the late seventh and early sixth centuries. But as we have determined, the location of the *semel haqqinʾâ* in Ezek 8:3, 5 is at the northern gate of the city wall. Still, I believe that the Chronicler, despite being confused about the location of Ezekiel's image, was correct in associating the

semel of Ezekiel with an *ʾăšērâ*.[81]

We know from the Bible that the image of Asherah, which surely is to be interpreted as a stylized tree,[82] was erected frequently by the Israelites. The Deuteronomistic history reports Israelite *ʾăšērîm* during the period of the League (Judg 6:25, 26, 28, 30) and in the period of the Divided Monarchy, both in the North (1 Kgs 14:15; 16:33; 2 Kgs 13:6; 17:10, 16; 23:15) and in the South (1 Kgs 14:23; 15:13; 2 Kgs 18:4; 21:3, 7; 23:6, 14). Of the Judean *ʾăšērîm*, almost all are located in Jerusalem (1 Kgs 15:13; 2 Kgs 21:7; 23:6, 14), as is Ezekiel's image of jealousy. Moreover, despite Josiah's reform, references to *ʾăšērîm* are still found in post-Josianic literature. Explicit condemnations of the *ʾăšērîm* occur in Jer 17:2 and Isa 27:9; below, in Chapter 4, I will argue that the cult of Asherah and its cult object are alluded to as well in Isa 65:1–7 (see also Isa 57:5). The *ʾăšērâ* is thus an object erected frequently in Judah and Israel, even in Jerusalem and even in the post-Josianic period.

The cult of Asherah has as a component part the offering of sacrifice. Thus it is a cult which would require an altar such as described in Ezek 8:5. The place of sacrifice in the Asherah cult is evident at several points in the Hebrew Bible. Manasseh erected an *ʾăšērâ* in the temple in Jerusalem (2 Kgs 21:7; cf. 2 Kgs 23:6); similarly, there was in the sixth century an *ʾăšērâ* at the Yahwistic altar erected by Jeroboam at Bethel (2 Kgs 23:15). This presence of an *ʾăšērâ* near an altar at the major cult sites of both Israel and Judah (cf. Deut 16:21 and Judg 6:25) certainly implies an associated cult of sacrifice. Indeed, the vessels made for *ʾăšērâ* which Josiah destroys in 2 Kgs 23:4 must have been used in the Jerusalem temple for pouring out libations as offerings to the goddess.

There is more evidence. 2 Chr 24:18 condemns the people for serving (*ʿbd*) the *ʾăšērâ*; to "serve" a deity implies sacrifice (see especially Isa

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[81]Ezekiel's *semel haqqinʾâ* is similarly interpreted by most commentators. See Carley, *Ezekiel*, 53; Craigie, *Ezekiel*, 57; Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 122–123; Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 168; Kaufmann, *Religion of Israel*, 144. Cf. the comments of D. N. Freedman, "Yahweh of Samaria and his Asherah," *BA* 50 (1987), 249.

[82]This is discussed in Chapter 4, pp. 189–191.

19:21, "they will serve [*ʿbd*] me with a sacrifice [*zbḥ*] and an offering [*mnḥh*]"). Isa 17:8 and 27:9 couple the cult of Asherah with incense altars. Jeremiah also implies a link between altars and *ʾăšērîm* (Jer 17:2). In addition, the *ʾăšērîm* are frequently erected at the *bāmôt* sanctuaries (1 Kgs 14:23; 2 Kgs 17:10–11; 18:4; 21:3; 23:13–14; 2 Chr 14:3; 17:6; 31:1; 34:3–4). We know that at the *bāmôt* sacrifice was offered and incense burned.[83] It seems perfectly appropriate therefore for the image of jealousy, which I have equated with an *ʾăšērâ*, to have an altar associated with it in Ezek 8:5.

The image of jealousy, as noted above, is to Ezekiel the least reprehensible abomination he confronts in his temple vision. The image is located on secular ground, at the city gate, the furthest of the four "apostasies" from the sacred temple precinct. God's words to Ezekiel after viewing each manifestation of popular religion, "you will see *still greater* abominations," indicate a progressive movement from least abhorent to most repulsive cult. How are we to interpret this observation in the light of our thesis that the image of jealousy is a cult object of the goddess Asherah?

Intriguing evidence comes from Kuntillet ʿAjrûd in the eastern Sinai, fifty km south of Kadesh Barnea, and from Khirbet el-Qôm, ten km east-southeast of Lachish. At Kuntillet ʿAjrûd, the excavator, Z. Meshel,[84] has discovered a ninth- or eighth-century sanctuary (located on a pilgrimage route?), which has yielded three sensational

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[83]See especially 2 Kgs 16:4, and, further, the extensive discussion in Chapter 4, pp. 169–194.

[84]The final excavation report has not yet appeared. Meshel's preliminary discussions of the finds at Kuntillet ʿAjrûd can be found in Z. Meshel, "Kuntillet ʿAjrûd—An Israelite Site from the Monarchical Period on the Sinai Border," *Qadmoniot* 9 (1976), 118–124 (Hebrew); Z. Meshel and C. Meyers, "The Name of God in the Wilderness of Zin," *BA* 39 (1976), 6–10; Z. Meshel, "Kuntillet ʿAjrûd—An Israelite Religious Center in Northern Sinai," *Expedition* 20 (1978), 50–54; idem, *Kuntillet ʿAjrûd: A Religious Center from the Time of the Judean Monarchy* (Israel Museum Catalogue 175; Jerusalem: Israel Museum, 1978); idem, "Did Yahweh Have a Consort? The New Religious Inscriptions from Sinai," *BARev* 5/2 (March/April, 1979), 24–34.

inscriptions. The first, on a large pithos, reads, *brkt ʾtkm lyhwh šmrn wlʾšrth*, "I bless you by Yahweh of Samaria and by his Asherah/asherah." The second reads, *yhwh tmn wʾšrth*, "Yahweh of the South and his Asherah/asherah," and the third, on another pithos, *brktk lyhwh* [ ] *wlʾšrth ybrk wyšmrk wyhy ʿm ʾdny*, "I bless you by Yahweh [ ] and his Asherah/asherah. May he bless you and keep you and be with my lord."

From Khirbet el-Qôm comes an eighth-century inscription which is more difficult. In the *editio princeps* in lines 2–3 W. G. Dever read *brk ʾryhw lyhwh wmʾrr yd lʾšr thhwš ʿlh* and translated, "Blessed be ʾUriyahu by Yahweh. And cursed shall be the hand of whoever (defaces it)!"[85] A. Lemaire in 1977,[86] before the publication of the ʿAjrûd material, proposed reading *brk ʾryhw lyhwh wmṣryh lʾšrth hwšʿ lh*, which he evaluated as grammatically nonsensical. Lemaire suggested that the scribe had transposed two words, which yielded a corrected reading of *brk ʾryhw lyhwh wlʾšrth mṣryh hwšʿ lh*, "Béni soit Uryahu par Yhwh et par son asherah; de ses ennemis il l'a sauvé." J. Naveh in 1979[87] read *brk ʾryhw lyhwh nṣry wlʾšrth hwšʿ lh*, "May PN be blessed by Yahweh my guardian and by his Asherah; save him." Dever, persuaded by the ʿAjrûd materials and by the work of Lemaire and Naveh, now favors reading the crucial word in the inscription as *lʾšrth*, "by his Asherah/asherah."[88] So too does P. D. Miller,[89] who reads *brk*

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[85]W. G. Dever, "Iron Age Epigraphic Material from the Area of Khirbet el-Kôm," *HUCA* 40/41 (1969–70), 159.

[86]A. Lemaire, "Les inscriptions de Khirbet el-Qôm et l'Ashérah de Yhwh," *RB* 84 (1977), 597–608. See also idem, "Who or What was Yahweh's Asherah? Startling Inscriptions from Two Different Sites Reopen the Debate about the Meaning of Asherah," *BARev* 10/6 (November/December, 1984), 42–51; idem, "Date et origine des inscriptions hébraiques et phéniciennes de Kuntillet ʿAjrûd," *Studi epigrafici e linguistici* 1 (1984), 131–143.

[87]J. Naveh, "Graffiti and Dedications," *BASOR* 235 (1979), 28, and 29–30, n. 10.

[88]See Dever's comments in "Asherah, Consort of Yahweh? New Evidence from Kuntillet ʿAjrûd," *BASOR* 255 (1984), 22; less completely, idem, "Recent Archaeological Confirmation of the Cult of Asherah in Ancient Israel," *Hebrew Studies* 23 (1982), 40; idem, "Material Remains and the Cult in Ancient Israel:

ʾryhw lyhwh wmṣryh lʾšrth hwšʿ lh, translating (note the prosodic elements):[90]

> Blessed is Uriyahu by Yahweh;
> Yea from his adversaries by his asherah he has saved him.

How, though, are we to interpret "his Asherah/asherah," *ʾaširatoh*, at Kuntillet ʿAjrûd and at Khirbet el-Qôm? Least likely in my opinion is that *ʾaširat* is a noun meaning "shrine." The meaning "shrine" for *ʾaširat* has been advanced most forcefully by E. Lipiński.[91] "Shrine" is the regular meaning of *aširat* in Phoenician and *aširtu* in Akkadian. *ʾtrʾ*, "shrine," also occurs in Aramaic. Moreover, it is possible in the ancient Near East to swear an oath by a shrine or temple,[92] suggesting that a blessing by a shrine is not inappropriate or impossible at ʿAjrûd or at el-Qôm.[93] But *ʾăšērâ* never means "shrine" in biblical Hebrew,[94] and it therefore seems unlikely that *ʾaširat* means "shrine" in the

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An Essay in Archaeological Systematics," *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth. Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Sixtieth Birthday* (ed. C. L. Meyers and M. O'Conner; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 579 and n. 17 on p. 583. Cf. also Z. Zevit, "The Khirbet el-Qôm Inscription Mentioning a Goddess," *BASOR* 255 (1984), 43–46; K. Jaroš, "Zur Inschrift Nr. 3 von Ḫirbet el-Qōm," *Biblische Notizen* 19 (1982), 31–40.

[89]Cf., however, S. Mittman, "Die Grabinschrift des Sängers Uriahu," *ZDPV* 97 (1981), 139–152.

[90]See P. D. Miller, Jr., "Psalms and Inscriptions," VTSup 32 (1981), 317. Miller is followed by J. M. Hadley, "The Khirbet el-Qom Inscription," *VT* 37 (1987), 50–62. Cf. M. O'Conner, "The Poetic Inscription from Khirbet el-Qôm," *VT* 37 (1987), 228–229.

[91]E. Lipiński, "The Goddess Aṯirat in Ancient Arabia, in Babylon, and in Ugarit," OLP 3 (1972), 101–119.

[92]See A. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1923), #44.1–3, which reads, "PN . . . swore . . . by Yahu, the god, by the temple, and by Anatyahu."

[93]*Contra* Dever, "Asherah," *BASOR* 255 (1984), 30.

[94]Lipiński's efforts to demonstrate that it does are well refuted by J. A. Emerton, "New Light on Israelite Religion: The Implications of the Inscriptions from Kuntillet ʿAjrud," *ZAW* 94 (1982), 16–18.

Hebrew of Kuntillet ʿAjrûd and Khirbet el-Qôm. Unless compelling evidence to the contrary can be cited, "it seems best . . . to interpret those Hebrew inscriptions in the light of known Hebrew usage."[95]

In Hebrew *ʾăšērâ* means either the cult object asherah, the stylized tree sacred to the goddess Asherah (as it does over thirty times in the Hebrew Bible), or it means Asherah, the goddess herself (Judg 3:7; 1 Kgs 15:13; 18:19; 2 Kgs 23:4). Which of the two it means at ʿAjrûd and at el-Qôm is debated. The use of singular verbs at points in the inscriptions from Kuntillet ʿAjrûd (and perhaps in the inscription from el-Qôm) argues against the translation Asherah, the goddess. Moreover, Hebrew grammar should not allow a suffix on a personal or divine name, which would also disallow the translation of *ʾaširatoh* as "his Asherah."[96] But to translate *ʾaširatoh* as "his asherah" (a stylized tree) is not without problems. The most often cited parallel to Kuntillet ʿAjrûd and Khirbet el-Qôm, the Aramaic letter from Saqqarah (*KAI* 50), "I bless you by Baal Saphon and by all the gods of Tahpanhes," has only divinities providing blessings, not a god and a cult object. Might we not likewise expect only deities at ʿAjrûd and el-Qôm?[97]

Choosing between "his Asherah" and "his asherah" cannot at this point, it seems, be decided. But for our purposes, it does not really matter. In the ancient Near East the idol was the god. *ʾšrth* at Kuntillet ʿAjrûd or Khirbet el-Qôm could refer to Asherah's cult object, the stylized tree, or even to some hypostatized aspect of the female side of Yahweh.[98] But what was the stylized tree or the hypostasis of the

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[95]Emerton, "New Light on Israelite Religion," *ZAW* 94 (1982), 18.

[96]For a possible, but I think unlikely, solution to this problem, see Zevit, "Khirbet el-Qôm Inscription," *BASOR* 255 (1984), 45–46. Zevit proposes that *ʾšrth* represents a dialectal form, *ʾašēratâ*, of the name Asherah. This dialectal form, according to Zevit, is marked as doubly feminine. See also O'Conner, "The Poetic Inscription," *VT* 37 (1987), 228–229. Cf. the solution of Freedman, "Yahweh of Samaria," *BA* 50 (1987), 246–249.

[97]See also the comments of P. D. Miller, Jr., "The Absence of the Goddess in Israelite Religion," *Hebrew Annual Review* 10 (1986), 246. But note again Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri*, #44.1–3.

[98]See the very suggestive comments of Miller, "The Absence of the

female side of Yahweh to the average worshiper in ancient Israel? Nothing other than Asherah, the goddess. To associate Yahweh with Asherah's cult object or with some hypostasized female aspect of Yahweh is to associate Yahweh with Asherah.

The implication of this thesis is that in some circles of Yahwism Yahweh and Asherah were paired, Asherah was the consort of Yahweh. Certainly this was not the case among Yahwists such as the Deuteronomists, who insisted that Israel worship Yahweh alone. Similarly the prophetic class showed little sympathy for the worship of other gods. But the evidence from Kuntillet ʿAjrûd and Khirbet el-Qôm would suggest that the definition of what constituted Yahwistic worship among the populace in ancient Israel was somewhat broader than prophetic and Deuteronomistic writings would lead us to believe.

This is the key to Ezek 8:3, 5. Ezekiel was a priest and prophet who surely was profoundly influenced by the religious reform sponsored by the Deuteronomistic protégé, Josiah. As a priest/prophet and a Deuteronomistic sympathizer, he had no place within his definition of Yahwism for the worship of Asherah. To him it was apostasy and abomination, and he condemned it as such. But the worship of Asherah was common in Israel and Judah, and it was for many people a legitimate part of Yahwistic religion. Ezekiel could not tolerate it. But compared to what else he saw in his vision, it was least reprehensible. It thus came first in his exploration of popular religion in sixth-century Jerusalem: every other "abomination" in Ezekiel 8 was "still greater." These cult acts were a further step away from what constituted true Yahwism in the prophet's mind.

Goddess," *Hebrew Annual Review* 10 (1986), 246; also P. K. McCarter, "Aspects of the Religion of the Israelite Monarchy: Biblical and Epigraphic Data," *Ancient Israelite Religion. Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross* (ed. P. D. Miller, Jr., P. D. Hanson, S. D. McBride; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 149. Note that to understand *ʾšrt* as a hypostatization would aid in explaining the lack of *ʾšrt* names in the Israelite epigraphic and biblical corpora. See J. Tigay, *You Shall Have No Other Gods: Israelite Religion in the Light of Hebrew Inscriptions* (Harvard Semitic Studies 31; Atlanta: Scholars, 1986). But cf. S. M. Olyan, *Asherah and the Cult of Yahweh in Israel* (SBLMS 34; Atlanta: Scholars, 1988), 35–37.

The Room of Reliefs

Ezek 8:7–13 is surely one of the most obscure passages in the Hebrew Bible. The passage begins (vv 7–9) with a confusing (and possibly textually confused) discussion of where Ezekiel was and how he got there. The Greek and Hebrew traditions vary, and both may be secondarily influenced by Ezek 12:5–7. Vv 10–13 do little to clear up the mystery. In these verses there is a description of the religious activity Ezekiel encounters. Here, the text is reasonably clear, but the obscurity remains, for the rite Ezekiel envisions is ostensibly like no other in the Hebrew Bible. Given these enigmatic verses, it is wise to caution from the first that any attempt at explication must be speculative. Still, I think we can say something about this second manifestation of the popular cult seen in Ezekiel's temple vision.

We have previously established that Ezekiel is brought in v 7 to the entrance of the great courtyard which surrounded the palace/temple complex in Jerusalem.[99] We should probably envision a courtyard encircled by a casemate wall with entrances provided by double-entry gates.[100] Ezekiel, upon divine command, envisions himself digging or tunneling into the casemate wall and eventually gaining entrance to a room or house in the vicinity of the courtyard entrance. Ezekiel probably finds himself at the end of these visionary exertions either in a room in the casemate wall itself or in a room that was part of a house attached to the casemate wall on the wall's interior side.[101] A room

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[99]See above, pp. 53–55.

[100]An older view maintained that casemate walls were used only in the period of the United Monarchy, replaced after that time with the stronger solid walls. It is now known, however, that casemate construction was fairly common throughout Iron II. See most recently and completely N. L. Lapp, "Casemate Walls in Palestine and the Late Iron II Casemate at Tell el-Ful (Gibeah)," *BASOR* 223 (1976), 25–42; also Y. Aharoni, "The Date of Casemate Walls in Judah and Israel and their Purpose," *BASOR* 154 (1959), 35–39.

[101]For both biblical (Josh 2:15–18; 2 Kgs 4:10) and archaeological (Tell Beit Mirsim, Beersheba, Tell en-Nasbeh) references to rooms within casemate walls, see L. E. Stager, "The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel," *BASOR* 260 (1985), 16. Also on the archaeological data, see Aharoni, "Casemate Walls," *BASOR* 154 (1959), 38; Lapp, "Casemate Walls," *BASOR* 223 (1976),

within the wall or a house attached to and extending back into the wall are at least the two structures most likely to be found in the immediate vicinity of the courtyard gate and wall.

Of these two possibilities, it seems more likely that Ezekiel finds himself in a room that was part of a house attached to the casemate wall. The text tells us that Ezekiel, having broken through the casemate wall,[102] confronts the seventy elders of Israel (v 11). But a room within a casemate wall would certainly not hold seventy people. Even if we dismiss the specific reference to "the seventy" as a stereotypical way of referring to the Israelite aristocracy, a large gathering is still implied. We must suppose that Ezekiel passed through the room inside the casemate wall, went through an opening (*petaḥ*; v 8) that led from the casemate room into a house, and entered this house that backed up onto the wall. There he found the seventy elders worshiping.

This is, of course, highly speculative. Other commentators have deleted vv 7b–8, as well as parts of vv 9–13, and argued that Ezekiel simply finds himself in the palace courtyard and views elders worshiping animals engraved as decoration on the courtyard's walls.[103] In this reconstruction there is no house, no room, no wall which is breached. But even if the details of my reconstruction are wholly wrong, I must insist that Ezekiel found himself in a house or room. Surely the point of the description of Ezekiel's bizarre activity in vv 7b–8 is to stress that Ezekiel was entering a place which he could not enter

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27–36; Y. Shiloh, "The Casemate Wall, the Four Room House, and Early Planning in the Israelite City," *BASOR* 268 (1987), 3–15.

[102]Casemate walls were constructed by building a double plaster and rubble wall between stone pillars. The area between the plaster and rubble walls was either filled in with debris or left empty. Surely Ezekiel did not envision himself breaking through the stone with which the casemate's pillars were constructed. It also seems unlikely that he saw himself tunneling through four to five meters of debris. But Ezekiel could have envisioned breaking through an outside wall of plaster and rubble and entering into a room inside the wall. Ezekiel's task in fact may have been made easier by the fact that there was already a hole (*ḥōr*) in the wall (v 7b).

[103]So, for example, Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 1, 240. For other possible emendations, see above, n. 20.

by conventional means. Such a place could not be the temple/palace courtyard, which was open to all. Rather, we must envision a house or room, entry to which was restricted. The elders, who were members of the group which worshiped in the house or room, could gain access to the space in a "normal" fashion, through the door which opened into the house or room from within the temple/palace courtyard. But Ezekiel was not a member of the worshiping group, and the front door of the house was barred to him. Ezekiel is thus forced to resort to more drastic means of entry. Vv 7b–8 seek to stress that the cult Ezekiel envisions in vv 10–12 is private, perhaps even secret.

What does Ezekiel see when he enters this room or house? The MT reads as follows (v 10):

> *whnh kl-tbnyt rmś wbhmh šqṣ wkl-glwly byt yśrʾl mḥqh ʿl hqyr sbyb sbyb*
>
> And there every kind of image of reptile and beast, abominations, and all the idols of the house of Israel were engraved on the wall round about.

It is obvious that *kl-tbnyt rmś wbhmh šqṣ* is syntactically unsatisfying, and we note that the G omits *tbnyt rmś wbhmh*. This shorter reading reflected by the G is undoubtedly correct: *tbnyt rmś wbhmh* is transparently a gloss, based on Deut 4:17–18, that attempts to explain *šeqeṣ*. To delete *tbnyt rmś wbhmh* yields a text *whnh kl-šqṣ wkl-glwly byt yśrʾl mḥqh ʿl hqyr sbyb sbyb*, which is syntactically preferable and which most commentators agree is correct.[104]

However, commentators on Ezekiel 8, while rejecting as secondary the gloss *tbnyt rmś wbhmh*, do not, in general, reject the glossator's suggestion that what *šeqeṣ* refers to in Ezekiel 8 is images of detestable animals, such as reptiles and beasts, which are engraved on the wall and are worshiped. We may take as representative the comments of Zimmerli:[105]

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[104]For example, Cooke, *Ezekiel*, 102; Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 169; Wevers, *Ezekiel*, 81; and Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 1, 219, n. a on v 10. See also above, n. 22.

[105]Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 1, 240–241.

> The *šqṣ*, subsequently filled out by "images of reptiles and beasts" . . . , speaks . . . plainly. This expression, which occurs eight times in Lev 11 and again in Lev 7:21 and Is 66:17, contains a ritual qualification. A comparison of Lev 11:10 (*šqṣ hm lkm*) with 11:8 (*ṭm' ym hm lkm*) shows *šqṣ* as synonymous with *ṭm'*. Similarly Lev 11 shows that in the animal world everything which points to hybrid creatures is avoided as *šqṣ*: creatures which live in water, which do not have scales and fins (Lev 11:10) like a normal fish; winged creatures which do not hop on two legs, as is normal for birds (Lev 11:20); above all small lizard-like creatures (Lev 11:29f). In the wall figures of Ezek 8:10 animals of these kinds appear to have been represented. Such creatures receive the incense offering of Israel's representatives.

To explain this strange custom of worshiping pictures of unclean animals, Zimmerli suggests Egyptian influence, envisioning, presumably, Egyptian zoomorphic deities.[106] The fullest presentation of this thesis of Egyptian influence is that of Albright, who compares to the supposed reliefs of unclean animals in Ezek 8:10 representations of serpents, crocodiles, beetles, baboons, lions, and so on, which appear in the many versions of the Egyptian Book of the Dead. Albright thus suggests that Ezek 8:7–13 describes a death cult of Osiris, a cult brought to Phoenicia by Egyptian traders which subsequently made its way south into Judah.[107] Others suggest that the reliefs are Babylonian images, possibly like those on Babylon's Ištar Gate.[108]

I believe, however, that the glossator who added *tbnyt rmś wbhmh* to the text is wrong in his interpretation of *šeqeṣ*. Indeed, if we look at the meaning of *šeqeṣ* elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible without being prejudiced by the gloss, we will find that *šeqeṣ* always refers to unclean food. In Leviticus 11, the chapter of Leviticus which describes animals the Israelites are permitted and forbidden to eat, *šeqeṣ* is used to describe water animals without fins or scales (vv 10, 11, 12), birds of

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[106]A similar explanation is also advanced by Carley, *Ezekiel*, 55; Craigie, *Ezekiel*, 61; and Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 123–125.

[107]Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, 166–167.

[108]So, for example, Cooke, *Ezekiel*, 94; Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 169–170.

prey and other forbidden birds (v 13), insects (vv 20, 23), and reptiles (vv 40, 41). Isa 66:17 is even more telling: there the people are condemned for eating swine's flesh, *šeqeṣ*, and mice.[109] In this verse *šeqeṣ* certainly refers to some kind of unclean food. Thus in both the sixth-century language of the priestly class (Leviticus 11) and the language of sixth-century prophets who condemn Israel for religious apostasy (Isa 66:17) *šeqeṣ* means unclean food. Surely Ezekiel, a priest and a prophet of the sixth century, uses the word in the same way.

In Ezek 8:10 I propose that the original Hebrew read something like **whnh kl-šqṣ wkl-glwly byt yśrʾl mḥqh ʿl ḥqyr sbyb sbyb*, which I would translate, "And there was every kind of unclean food, and all the idols of the house of Israel were engraved on the wall round about." That is, Ezekiel saw a double "abomination": (1) unclean foods laid out to be eaten at a meal, and (2) idols engraved on the walls of the room in which the meal was to be eaten.

I would further suggest that since the idols on the wall were being worshiped (vv 11–12), the meal in question was ritual in nature, a banquet dedicated to or in honor of the idols pictured in relief. Moreover, I submit that since the room in which the banquet was held was decorated with permanent engravings, this ritual banquet dedicated to or in honor of some deity or deities was a regular event and not a one-time affair. The fact that the engravings were permanent also suggests that those who worshiped in the room either owned the room or had perpetual control over it. I further note that those who assembled to partake of the ritual banquet were the seventy elders of Israel, that is, Israel's aristocracy, and that we identified the locus of the banquet as somewhere within the courtyard of the palace complex. It is tempting to label this ritual banquet, which was (1) held under the patronage of some god or gods, (2) celebrated regularly in a room owned by or in the control of the worshipers, and (3) partaken of by the aristocracy within the palace boundaries, a *marzēaḥ*.

The *marzēaḥ* is an institution which flourished throughout the west Semitic world from the Late Bronze Age to the Roman period. It is

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[109]On Isa 66:17, see further Chapter 4, pp. 202–212.

known from Ugarit, from Israel, both from Samaria (Amos 6:4–7) and from Judah (Jer 16:5–9), from Elephantine, from Punic colonies, from Nabatean inscriptions, from Palmyra, from rabbinical references, and from the Madaba map. But despite these widespread attestations and despite the fact that the *marzēaḥ* has been extensively studied in the last two decades, questions still remain about its character. Still, many features of the *marzēaḥ* are certain, and a description of them is germane for our discussion of Ezek 8:7–13.

It is clear that the *marzēaḥ* centered around feasting and especially around drinking. At Ugarit El eats and drinks in his *marzēaḥ* until he collapses in his own excrement (*Ugaritica* 5, 1 [RS 24.258], 15–21). The *marzēaḥ* associations at Ugarit typically owned fields and vineyards,[110] and the produce from these agricultural lands was undoubtedly used in the associations' banquets. Amos 6:4–7 describes two of the typical activities of the *marzēaḥ* as the eating of lambs and fatted calves (v 4) and the drinking of wine out of ceremonial bowls (v 6).[111] Amos' description of the drinking bowls used in the *marzēaḥ* is vividly illustrated by a bronze *phiale* from the Persian period with a Phoenician inscription which identifies the bowl as part of the apparatus of the *marzēaḥ* of Shamash.[112] Jeremiah, like Amos, characterizes the *marzēaḥ* as a place of eating and drinking, and in Jer 16:5–9 *bêt marzēaḥ* and *bêt mišteh* are to be taken as synonyms. Both are houses where one goes to eat and drink. Evidence for the *marzēaḥ* feast is also found in material from the turn of the era. The Piraeus inscription (*KAI* 60) from 96 B.C.E. mentions a *marzēaḥ* feast of several days' length, and Palmyrene glyptic evidence shows the leader of a *marzēaḥ*

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[110]See *PRU* 4, 230 (RS 18.01), where the ownership of a vineyard is split between the *marzēaḥ* associations of the cities of Ari and Siyannu, and *KTU* 4.642 (RS 19.103), which seems to associate a field and vineyard with the *mrzḥ ʿn*[ ], probably the *marzēaḥ* of Anat (see below, n. 115).

[111]It is J. C. Greenfield ("The *marzēaḥ* as a Social Institution," *Acta Antiqua* 22 [1974], 453, especially n. 15 on that page) who particularly points out that the activities listed in Amos 6:4–6 are typical of the *marzēaḥ* mentioned in v 7.

[112]N. Avigad and J. C. Greenfield, "A Bronze *phiale* with a Phoenician Dedicatory Inscription," *IEJ* 32 (1982), 118–128.

reclining on a couch under a vine, as if at a banquet.[113] The Piraeus evidence is also important for pointing to the regular and periodic nature of the *marzēaḥ* feast.

These *marzēaḥ* feasts were religious in nature, held under the patronage of one of the high gods of the pantheon. At Ugarit we find *marzēaḥ* associations dedicated to El,[114] to Anat,[115] and to the god Šatrana (*PRU* 3, 130 [RS 15.70]). The bronze *phiale* from the Persian period described above is dedicated to the *marzēaḥ* of Shamash. The *marzēaḥ* mentioned in the Marseilles Tariff inscription (*KAI* 69), the *mrzḥ ʾlm*, "*marzēaḥ* of the god," was probably a *marzēaḥ* of Baal Saphon, who is referred to earlier in the inscription. A Nabatean *marzēaḥ* is under the patronage of Obodas I, a dead Nabatean king who was deified. The most popular of the *marzēaḥ* associations at Palmyra was dedicated to Bel; the religious character of this *marzēaḥ* is clearly shown by the fact that it counted the Palmyrene priests of Bel among its members. One Palmyrene tessera shows a priest, the leader of the *marzēaḥ*, burning incense before a god, presumably the god to whom the *marzēaḥ* was dedicated.[116]

However, as especially J. C. Greenfield has pointed out, it is wrong to stress the religious character of the *marzēaḥ* to the exclusion of the social.[117] The members of ancient Near Eastern *marzēaḥ* associations were from the aristocracies of their respective societies. Amos 6:4–7

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[113]See H. Ingholt, H. Seyrig, J. Starcky, *Receuil des tessères de Palmyra* (Institut français d'archéologie de Beyrouth, Bibliothèque archéologique et historique 58; Paris: Imprimerie Nationale; Paris: Librairie orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1955), Nos. 27, 30, 33, 35, and many other examples.

[114]As described in first mythological text in *Ugaritica* 5 (*Ugaritica* 5, 1 [RS 24.258]).

[115]*mrzḥ ʿn*[*t*] has been convincingly restored in *KTU* 4.642 (RS 19.103) by O. Eissfeldt ("Etymologische und archäologische Erklärung alttestamentlicher Wörter," *Kleine Schriften* 4 [ed. R. Sellheim und F. Maass; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1968], 294).

[116]Ingholt, Seyrig, and Starcky, *Receuil des tessères de Palmyra*, No. 17b; cf. Nos. 697b and 820a.

[117]J. C. Greenfield, "Social Institution," *Acta Antiqua* 22 (1974), 451–455.

particularly describes the luxurious lifestyle in which the *marzēaḥ*'s members participated: they lounged on beds decorated with expensive ivory inlay, they ate the prime meats from the herdsman's crop, they amused themselves by making music, they drank wine from *mizrāqîm*, bowls typically made of gold or silver,[118] and they anointed themselves with the finest (and dearest) of oils. Greenfield writes:[119]

> It is clear that membership in the *marzēaḥ* was limited to those who could afford its luxuries, those who were the property owners of Samaria described as "sure and confident" of themselves in verse 1 of this chapter and as dwelling in great houses in verse 8.

The *marzēaḥ*'s wealthy nature is also demonstrated by the fact that the association owned property. One Ugaritic *marzēaḥ* claims assets of one thousand shekels.[120] We have already noted that Ugaritic texts describe fields and vineyards owned by various *marzēaḥ* associations. The most important property owned by the *marzēaḥ*, however, was the *bêt marzēaḥ*, the house in which the *marzēaḥ* met and where the ritual banquet of the *marzēaḥ* was periodically held. The house was owned in common by the members of the *marzēaḥ*, and presumably they paid dues toward its upkeep. Again, a membership with a fairly large income is implied.

The aristocratic status of the *marzēaḥ*'s members often meant that there was a close association between the *marzēaḥ* and a society's political powers. In fourteenth-century Ugarit King Niqmepa gave a house to the men of a *marzēaḥ* and to their children forever (*PRU* 3, 88 [RS 15.88]). We must assume a fairly intimate relationship between the

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[118]See Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri*, #30.12, and Num 7:13, 19, 25, 31, 37, 43, 49, 55, 61, 67, 73, 79, 84, and 85. (The references are from Greenfield, "Social Institution," *Acta Antiqua* 22 [1974], 453.)

[119]Greenfield, "Social Institution," *Acta Antiqua* 22 (1974), 453.

[120]RS 14.16, published by Ch. Virolleaud, "Six textes de Ras Shamra provenant de la XIV^{e} campaigne (1950)," *Syria* 28 (1951), 163–179. In Virolleaud's translation the amount of money in question is ten thousand shekels; for the corrected reading, see T. J. Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit* (HSM 39; Atlanta: Scholars, 1989), 81, n. 6.

monarch and this *marzēaḥ*'s membership. King Niqmepa's son attached his seal to a contract which describes how the house of the *marzēaḥ* of Šatrana was taken over by an official, who gave the *marzēaḥ* another house in return (*PRU* 3, 130 [RS 15.70]). The monarch at Ugarit "transferred and confirmed the ownership of *marzēaḥ* property."[121] Elsewhere, an Ugaritic text describes how a vineyard of Hurrian Ištar which lay between the two cities of Ari and Siyannu was divided between the men of the *marzēaḥ* of Ari and the men of the *marzēaḥ* of Siyannu as part of a political settlement (*PRU* 4, 230 [RS 18.01]). The document detailing this transaction was sealed by the king of Siyannu. Again we note that a *marzēaḥ* and its members play a role in the political process and that their actions have state sanction.[122] The "members of the *marzēaḥ*" (*mt mrzḥ* at Ugarit, *bny mrzḥ* at Nabatea and Palmyra) and the "leader of the *marzēaḥ*" (*rb mrzḥ*; G *symposiarchos*) are wealthy aristocrats and property owners.[123] Not surprisingly, these men have close ties to palace and king.

It remains to discuss the purpose of the ancient Near Eastern *marzēaḥ* banquets, especially the possible relation of the *marzēaḥ* to the funerary cult. At Ugarit, such a relationship cannot be conclusively demonstrated, although the three occurrences of *mrzʿ*, an alternative form of *mrzḥ*, in *CTA* 21 (lines 1, 5, and 9), a text concerned with the *rāpiʾūma*, the deified dead, at least suggest funerary elements in the Ugaritic *marzēaḥ* associations. But certainly by the first millennium the funerary character of the *marzēaḥ* is clear. Jeremiah remarks in Jer 16:5–9 that mourning is a major feature of the *marzēaḥ*. Jeremiah is forbidden to go to the *bêt marzēaḥ* to grieve or lament. Also noteworthy is the *marzēaḥ* association at Nabatea, which was under the patronage of a dead king, Obodas I, who had been deified. The funerary imagery

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[121]Greenfield, "Social Institution," *Acta Antiqua* 22 (1974), 453.

[122]This is especially pointed out by P. D. Miller, Jr., "The *Mrzḥ* Text," *The Claremont Ras Shamra Tablets* (ed. L. R. Fisher; AnOr 48; Roma: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1971), 45.

[123]J. Teixidor (*The Pagan God. Popular Religion in the Greco-Roman Near East* [Princeton: Princeton University, 1977], 44–45) makes this point particularly well in discussing the *marzēaḥ* at Piraeus.

here is obvious.

To summarize: the *marzēaḥ* is a religious and social institution. It is organized under the patronage of some god, and its primary activity is the worship of that god at a ritual banquet held periodically in the god's honor. This banquet is held at the *bêt marzēaḥ*, a house owned jointly by the members of the *marzēaḥ*. The *marzēaḥ* and its members can also own vineyards and fields. The *marzēaḥ* draws its membership from the upper classes of society; the members, not surprisingly, often have close connections to the monarchy. The purpose of the banquet, when specified, is funerary.

The comparisons between these data and Ezek 8:7–13 are obvious. In Ezekiel 8 Ezekiel finds himself, I suggested above, in a house, which I would interpret as a *bêt marzēaḥ*. Ezekiel sees there a ritual banquet which is dedicated to a god or gods pictured in reliefs on the walls of the house. The ritual feast must have occurred regularly, as is argued by the fact that the walls are permanently decorated. And, just as in the Palmyrene tessera described above, incense is offered to the patron god or gods as part of the ceremony.

The men who participate in the ritual in Ezekiel 8 are the "seventy elders of Israel," that is, Israel's aristocracy. These men should be compared with the *mt mrzḥ* or *bny mrzḥ*, the aristocratic members of other ancient Near Eastern *marzēaḥ* associations. The "men of the *marzēaḥ*" are led by Jaazaniah, son of Shaphan, who is, if I am correct, the *rb mrzḥ*. Jaazaniah and the "men of the *marzēaḥ*" meet in a house which they most likely own; if they do not own the house, it certainly must be considered to be in their permanent control, for they have the right to decorate it as they choose. The house's location within the palace courtyard suggests an organization at least approved by, if not sponsored by, the king, and again we recall the proximity of the *marzēaḥ* associations of Ugarit to that city-state's power structure.

The purpose of the ritual practiced in Ezek 8:7–13 is unspecified. Nor is any funerary imagery present in these verses. But this does not preclude our interpretation of Ezek 8:7–13 as a *marzēaḥ*. Much of the ancient Near Eastern *marzēaḥ* material fails to identify the purpose of the *marzēaḥ* ritual. This material often even lacks allusions to funerary rites. Most germane for our purposes is Amos 6:4–7. These verses

contain no funerary language, yet the text indicates that the rites described are a *marzēaḥ*. Ezek 8:7–13 should be evaluated the same way.

In short, although no conclusive interpretation of Ezek 8:7–13 is possible, given the enigmatic nature of the text, the west Semitic data on *marzēaḥ* associations are suggestive. Certainly it is more appealing to elucidate Ezek 8:7–13 by reference to known west Semitic cults than to seek explication in far-flung Egyptian or Babylonian rites. The materials currently available thus suggest, I submit, that the second cultic abomination Ezekiel confronted in his temple vision was a *marzēaḥ*.

The place of the *marzēaḥ* in Israelite society is not wholly clear. Amos condemns the *marzēaḥ* of Samaria (Amos 6:4–7), and God forbids Jeremiah to enter the *bêt marzēaḥ* in Jerusalem (Jer 16:5–9). From these texts we might infer that the prophets do not consider *marzēaḥ* associations to be a legitimate part of the religion of Israel. But a closer look is necessary. Amos does not attack the religious aspects of the *marzēaḥ* of Samaria; rather he criticizes the *marzēaḥ* for what he perceives to be its social flaws. The *marzēaḥ* is for Amos a symbol of the conspicuous consumption of the upper classes, an emblem of a lifestyle characterized by luxury and wealth. Amos, as a champion for the poor and oppressed members of Israelite society, despises the *marzēaḥ* as an institution of the rich. Moreover, Amos regards the men who belong to the *marzēaḥ* as those property owners who have accumulated money and land at the expense of the poor. To Amos, those who can afford to belong to the *marzēaḥ* are in violation of Yahwistic law. They have acquired their riches through the toil of their fellow citizens. The *marzēaḥ* is not religiously apostate, but it is social abomination. Amos condemns it because it is an institution which both symbolizes and exists because of economic injustice.

In discussing Jer 19:5–9 we must also take into account the context of the passage in which God forbids Jeremiah to enter the *bêt marzēaḥ*. In Jeremiah 16 God commands Jeremiah to forgo a normal life in order that the prophet's life become a symbol for the doom about to befall Judah. Jeremiah is forbidden to marry and have children and to

participate in the typical mourning rites of his culture, rites which included eating and drinking at the *bêt marzēaḥ*. Here, the institution of the *marzēaḥ* is not itself condemned, rather, it is perceived as a regular part of the society's life. Only Jeremiah, to whom God denies a normal life, is forbidden to participate in the *marzēaḥ* banquet.

If, however, Amos and Jeremiah imply that the *marzēaḥ* is a religiously acceptable institution in Israel and Judah, why does Ezekiel condemn a cultic ritual which we have identified as a *marzēaḥ* banquet? It is possible that Ezekiel condemns the *marzēaḥ* simply because it violates the law prohibiting graven images and the priestly dietary laws. But it is more likely that the *marzēaḥ* of Ezekiel 8 is condemned because it was under the patronage of a god other than Yahweh. This is suggested somewhat by the description of the food served at the ritual meal as *šeqeṣ*, that is, unclean foods forbidden to Yahwists in the sixth-century priestly code (Leviticus 11). But far more significant is the reference to idols engraved on the walls. It is hard to imagine that these engraved images of the patron god of the *marzēaḥ* are representations of Yahweh. The aniconic tradition in Israel was archaic, probably Mosaic, and it seems to persist throughout Israel's history. The biblical materials never mention that images were made of Yahweh, and archaeological explorations have not revealed any representations of Israel's national god.[124] It seems unlikely that the reliefs in the *bêt marzēaḥ* pictured Yahweh. I submit that the engravings depicted some other god to whom the elders of Israel dedicated their *marzēaḥ* and whom they worshiped. Certainly Jer 19:13 and 44:17, 21 imply that the aristocracy and the monarchy of the early sixth century did not devote themselves to the worship of Yahweh alone.

In Ezekiel 8 Ezekiel, we have noted several times, moves in his vision from what he considers least reprehensible to most repulsive cult. The religious observance encountered in the room of reliefs comes after Ezekiel is shown an image of Asherah and before Ezekiel sees and hears women wailing over Tammuz. The placement of the *marzēaḥ* ritual after the encounter with the worship of Asherah but before the

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[124]See, for example, the recent comments of Dever, "Material Remains," *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth*, 574, and n. 12 on pp. 582–583.

encounter with the worship of Tammuz is appropriate. In confronting the image of Asherah, Ezekiel confronted a goddess who in some circles of Yahwism was considered the consort of Yahweh. Asherah was thus a deity whose worship was at least to some consistent with the worship of Yahweh. When he encountered women wailing over Tammuz, Ezekiel encountered a god, Tammuz, whose worship has no connection with the worship of Yahweh and a rite, mourning the death of a fertility god, which Ezekiel insists has no part in the cult of Yahweh. The *marzēaḥ* in Ezek 8:7–13 lies in between. The elders participating in the *marzēaḥ* worship a god whose worship is not connected to the worship of Yahweh. In this they go a step further than those who worship the image of Asherah as Yahweh's consort. But at the same time the rite the elders employ, the *marzēaḥ* banquet, is a legitimate ritual in the cult of Yahweh. Unlike those who wail over Tammuz, the elders, according to Ezekiel, do not depart from normal Yahwistic cult activity. That is, the deity worshiped in Ezek 8:7–13 is alien, the means of worship is not. Ezekiel will see "still greater abominations." He will see foreign gods worshiped in alien rituals. The *marzēaḥ* dedicated to another god, although repulsive to Ezekiel, is not as repugnant as it could be. The ritual, the rite, of the *marzēaḥ* is familiar and acceptable. But the deity on whom the ritual focuses is in his mind wrong.

Wailing over Tammuz

In Ezek 8:14 Ezekiel, at the northern entrance of the temple's inner courtyard, sees and hears women wailing over Tammuz. The description of this ritual is brief: the text says only **whnh šm nšym yšbwt mbkwt ʾt htmwz*, "and there were women sitting there, wailing over Tammuz."[125] But even given its brevity, the text contains none of the ambiguities which plagued us in our attempts to identify the image of jealousy and the room of reliefs. The god Tammuz is well known from Mesopotamian sources. Moreover, Mesopotamian evidence makes clear that ritual mourning performed by women is a crucial element of

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[125]The definite article of Hebrew *htmwz* is to be understood as appellative. Cf. Judg 2:11, 13; 3:7; 10:6.

the Tammuz cult. To describe the cult condemned in Ezek 8:14, then, requires only a brief examination of the myths and rituals of the Mesopotamian Tammuz cult. Following our description of the Tammuz cult, however, we must assume the more complicated task of explaining how the east Semitic Tammuz cult infiltrated into the west Semitic world, especially how it came to be in the temple's inner courtyard in Jerusalem in the sixth century.

The god Tammuz is known in Mesopotamia as early as the Sumerian period (under the name Dumuzi), and the cult of Tammuz continued to thrive in Babylonia throughout the second and first millennia. The mythology of this young fertility god centers around his courting and wooing of the maiden Iš̆tar (Sumerian Inanna), who also symbolizes fertility and especially represents the communal storehouse in which harvested foodstuffs were kept. Tammuz is successful in his courtship of Iš̆tar, and the fertility god and goddess marry. With their sexual union they guarantee fruitfulness in the land and bounty in the storehouse. This is symbolized in the myth by the fact that Tammuz, as his wedding gift to Iš̆tar, brings to his bride produce to be placed in her storehouse.

Although seasonal interpretations of ancient Near Eastern mythology are often unwarranted, the myths of Tammuz do seem best understood as having agricultural concerns as their major (but not exclusive) focus. Thus, as the short spring season of fecundity in Mesopotamia was soon threatened by the hot, dry summer, so was this movement from spring to summer expressed in the myths of Tammuz through the untimely death of the young fertility god. That is, when the spring season of new vegetation, the spring birthings of calves and lambs, and the short spring milking season came to an end in June/July,[126] the mythology

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[126]There is some debate on which aspect of fertility the young Tammuz "represents." In the Sumerian period Dumuzi predominantly is characterized as a shepherd. But this characterization changes in Babylonian religion. Most scholars regard Akkadian Tammuz as symbolizing the young spring vegetation. T. Jacobsen ("The Myth of Inanna and Bilulu," *Toward the Image of Tammuz and Other Essays on Mesopotamian History and Culture* [ed. W. L. Moran; Cambridge: Harvard University, 1970], 56–57), in an attempt to reconcile the young Babylonian fertility god with his ancient Sumerian characterization as a

perceived that Tammuz had died.[127]

Facile equations of myth and ritual must be avoided (as numerous critiques of the myth and ritual school have made clear).[128] Still, it is acknowledged by all commentators that the Mesopotamian myth of Tammuz is to some degree reflective of and at the same time reflected in Mesopotamian cultic rites. In spring the sacred marriage of Tammuz and Ištar was ritually celebrated.[129] Later, as spring turned to summer, the death of Tammuz was commemorated in the cult through ritual lamentations. This mourning over Tammuz was primarily done by women. The prominence of women in the rituals of Tammuz is again consistent with the mythology of the young fertility god. Excepting Tammuz, the characters in the Tammuz myth are almost exclusively women: Tammuz's young bride, Inanna/Ištar, his sister, Geštinanna, and his mother, Sirtur/Ninsun. When Tammuz dies, it is these three women who mourn his passing:[130] "male representatives such as a

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shepherd, has proposed that Tammuz represents the "life-giving powers in the milk." See further O. R. Gurney, "Tammuz Reconsidered: Some Recent Developments," *JSS* 12 (1962), 150, 159–160; also Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 1, 242.

[127]For a much fuller description of the mythology of Tammuz, see T. Jacobsen, *The Treasures of Darkness. A History of Mesopotamian Religion* (New Haven and London: Yale University, 1976), 23–73.

[128]See, most recently, R. S. Hendel, *The Epic of the Patriarch: The Jacob Cycle and the Narrative Traditions of Canaan and Israel* (HSM 42; Atlanta: Scholars, 1987), 69–71; add to Hendel's references W. Burkert, *Homo Necans: The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California, 1983), 29–34; for additional remarks by Burkert, see the references compiled by N. Robertson, "The Ritual Background of the Dying God in Cyprus and Syro-Palestine," *HTR* 75 (1982), 314, n. 7.

[129]S. N. Kramer, *The Sacred Marriage Rite. Aspects of Faith, Myth, and Ritual in Ancient Sumer* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University, 1969), 49–66; less completely, idem, "The Dumuzi-Inanna sacred marriage rite: origin, development, character," *Actes de la XVII^e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale* (Universite Libre de Bruxelles, 30 juin–4 juillet, 1969; ed. A. Finet; Bruxelles: Comité belge de recherches en Mésopotamie, 1970), 135–141.

[130]Note, for example, the laments of lover, sister, and mother over Dumuzi/Tammuz collected by T. Jacobsen, *Treasures of Darkness*, 49–55; also

sorrowing father or brother are absent."[131]

In short, the Mesopotamian cult of Tammuz centered around a myth of the courtship and marriage of a god, Dumuzi/Tammuz, and a goddess, Inanna/Ištar, both of whom were associated with fertility. The sexual union of the god and goddess insured fertility for the land. But the fruitfulness yielded by the marriage came to an abrupt end when the young fertility god died. In myth his death was bitterly mourned by his lover and his family; in a cultic manifestation of this mythic mourning women lamented and wept over the death of the god. The few details Ezekiel reveals about Tammuz worship in sixth-century Jerusalem, that it is a cult in which women participate and that it involves ritual mourning, are well explained by reference to Mesopotamian Tammuz rites.

The east Semitic cult of Tammuz is found in the west Semitic sphere already in the Bronze Age.[132] In Syria as early as the first half of the second millennium there was a month called Dumuzi.[133] In the fourteenth century Prince Rib-Addi of Byblos wrote in a letter to the

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see Jacobsen's comments in "Toward the Image of Tammuz," *Toward the Image of Tammuz and Other Essays*, 77–78; S. N. Kramer, "The Weeping Goddess: Sumerian Prototypes of the *Mater Dolorosa*," *BA* 46 (1983), especially pp. 76–79.

[131]Jacobsen, "Toward the Image of Tammuz," *Toward the Image of Tammuz and Other Essays*, 91.

[132]Cf. most commentators, who assume it was Judah's sixth-century Babylonian conquerors who brought the cult west to Jerusalem. Cf. also Zimmerli (*Ezekiel* 1, 242–243) and Eichrodt (*Ezekiel*, 126), who assume that it was the Assyrians in the last decades of the eighth century and during the seventh century who imposed the worship of Tammuz upon the West. But M. Cogan (*Imperialism*) and J. McKay (*Religion in Judah under the Assyrians* [SBT (Second Series) 26; Naperville, IL: Alan R. Allenson, 1973]) have recently argued that the Assyrian conquerors did not require vassal states such as Judah to adopt Assyrian cults. Moreover, McKay has noted (*Religion in Judah*, 68–69) that the worship of Tammuz was not really an Assyrian, but rather a Babylonian, cult.

[133]See E. Dhorme, "Déchiffrement des inscriptions pseudo-hiéroglyphiques de Byblos," *Syria* 25 (1946–48), 8; Kramer, *Sacred Marriage*, 160, n. 48.

Egyptian pharaoh at Amarna (EA 84, 31–35):[134]

> And let my lord [Pharaoh] send men in order to take the property of Damu to my lord, but let not that dog [ʿAbd-ʾAširta] take any property of thy gods.

W. F. Albright comments:[135]

> It is likely that the Damu mentioned in the Amarna tablets from Byblos is the Damu of the Sumerian Tammuz litanies from the early second millennium B.C. where it is the short form of the name of the latter.

From the Iron Age comes a description of the plants (*naʿămān*) and slips (*zĕmōrâ*) planted by the Israelites as part of the worship of an alien god (*zār*) in Isa 17:9–11. This is generally considered to be a reference to a Judahite cult of Tammuz,[136] since Greek evidence, in particular, makes clear that to plant gardens in honor of Tammuz (Greek Adonis) was an important ritual associated with the god's cult.[137] Greek

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[134]The text reads: *ù lu-wa-ši-ra be-li-ia amēlūtu ú ti-il-ku mi-im-mi*^{meš} *d*$_{da}$*-mu-ia a-na ma-ḫar béli-ia ù ú-ul il-ti-qa mi-im-ma*^{meš} *ša ilāni-ka.* The translation is that of W. F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, 147, n. 100.

[135]Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, 147; see also W. L. Moran, *Les lettres d'El-Amarna. Correspondance diplomatique du pharaon* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1987), 267–268, 590; O. Schroeder, "Über den Namen des Tammuz von Byblos in der Amarnazeit," *OLZ* 18 (1915), 291–292.

[136]O. Eissfeldt, *Adonis und Adonaj* (Sitzungsberichte der sächischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, Philologisch-historische Klasse 115/4; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1970), 19–20; M. Delcor, "Le problème des jardins d'Adonis dans Isaïe 17, 9–11 à la lumière de la civilisation syro-phénicienne," *Syria* 55 (1978), 371–394.

[137]W. Atallah, *Adonis dans la littérature et l'art grecs* (Études et commentaires 62; Paris: C. Klincksieck, 1966), 211–228; M. Detienne, *The Gardens of Adonis. Spices in Greek Mythology* (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1977), 99–122; K. Galling, "Die *Terpōlē* des Alexander Jannaus," *Von Ugarit nach Qumran* (Festschrift O. Eissfeldt; ed. J. Hempel und L. Rost; BZAW 77; Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1958), 59–61; N. Weill, "*Adôniazousai* ou les

evidence is significant for another reason, for already in the Archaic period rites of Tammuz/Adonis were known in the Hellenic world.[138] The Greeks must have borrowed this cult from their Levantine neighbors, further indicating that the Tammuz cult did spread from Mesopotamia to Syria-Palestine and beyond throughout the Bronze and Iron Ages.

It is easy to understand why the Tammuz cult was assimilated so readily into west Semitic religion. Canaanite religion in the Late Bronze and Iron Ages had an indigenous tradition of a dying fertility god. Moreover, in the religious rites associated with this ancient tradition, the passing of the dead fertility god was mourned. While the east Semitic Tammuz had a foreign name and many alien characteristics, the rites and myths associated with a dying fertility god were native to Canaan. The Canaanites could thus accept the Mesopotamian Tammuz cult as one consistent with their own religion.

It is the mythic cycle of Baal from Ugarit which best describes the demise of the Canaanite fertility god *par excellence*, Baal Haddu, at the hands of the god of Death, Môt. The description of Baal's descent into Môt's kingdom in the underworld is indeed graphic (*CTA* 5.2.2–4):[139]

[špt la]rṣ špt lšmm
[yark l]šn lkbkbm
yʿrb bʿl bkbdh
bph yrd

[One lip to ea]rth, one lip to heaven,
[He stretched out his] tongue to the stars.

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femmes sur le toit," *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique* 90 (1966), 664–698.

[138]W. Burkert, *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California, 1979), 105–106, with references on p. 192, n. 2; see also H. Ringgren, *Religions of the Ancient Near East* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1973), 136; Robertson, "Dying God," *HTR* 75 (1982), 342, 352–354.

[139]For the reconstruction of *CTA* 5.2.2–3, see F. M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 117, and n. 18 on that page; U. Cassuto, *Biblical and Oriental Studies* 2, *Bible and Ancient Oriental Texts* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1975), 155.

Baal entered his gorge,
He descended into his mouth.

This motif of Môt swallowing Baal is also found in the god of Death's triumphal cry (*CTA* 6.2.21–23):

ngš ank aliyn bʿl
ʿdbnn ank imr bpy
klli bṯbrn q<n>y ḫtu hw

I approached Mighty Baal,
I made him like a lamb in my mouth,
Like a kid in the breech of my windpipe he was carried away.

Eventually the word of Baal's death comes to El, the head of the Ugaritic pantheon (*CTA* 5.6.9–10; cf. *CTA* 6.1.41–43):

mt aliyn bʿl
ḫlq zbl bʿl arṣ

Dead is Mighty Baal,
Perished is the Prince, Lord of Earth.

The death of the fertility god Baal is the occasion for lament, and El initiates mourning rituals we know to be typical in the Canaanite world (*CTA* 5.6.11–22). He sits on a low stool[140] and clothes himself with sackcloth and ashes.[141] He makes ritual cuts in his skin[142] and perhaps shaves off his facial hair (how to interpret the text is not wholly

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[140]See Isa 47:1 and Ezek 26:16, and note the Jewish custom of sitting *shiva* which continues to this day.

[141]See, for example, Isa 32:11; Jer 6:26; 25:34; 48:37; Ezek 27:30; Amos 8:10; Mic 1:10. This practice is widespread throughout the Mediterranean; note, for example, *Iliad* 18.23–25; 24.162–165; *Odyssey* 24.316–317.

[142]Although Deuteronomistic (Deut 14:1) and also priestly law (Lev 19:28) forbade the ritual cutting of flesh as a mourning rite, the practice was known in ancient Israel. See Lev 21:5; Jer 16:6; 41:5; 47:5; 48:37; and the discussion of 1 Kgs 18:28 and Hos 7:14 below. Note also the Greek practice of scratching one's cheeks until the blood runs.

clear).[143] Finally, El raises a cry of lamentation (*CTA* 5.6.23–25; cf. *CTA* 6.1.6–7):

bʿl mt my lim
bn dgn my hmlt

Baal is dead! What will become of the people?
The son of Dagan! What will happen to the masses?

Similarly, Anat, Baal's consort/sister, cuts her flesh and laments (*CTA* 6.1.2–8). The myth poignantly describes her mourning (*CTA* 6.1.9–10):

tšbʿ bk
tšt kyn udmʿt

She sated herself with weeping,
She drank tears like wine.

Unfortunately, we do not know how (or if) this Ugaritic mythology which describes Baal's death and the associated mourning was commemorated in the Late Bronze Age Canaanite cult. But for first millennium religion there is intriguing biblical evidence, found in 1 Kings 18; Hos 7:4; and Zech 12:10–11.

1 Kings 18 describes Elijah's contest on Mount Carmel with the prophets of Baal. Although the title *baʿal*, "lord," can be applied to many gods in west Semitic religion, the god called Baal in the Carmel story is surely to be understood as the storm god Baal Haddu. Observe that imagery of drought (1 Kgs 17:1; 18:1–6) and deluge (18:41–45) envelops the narrative. Also note that the Baal associated with Carmel in 1 Kings 18 is worshiped by the Phoenician princess Jezebel. Jezebel's

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[143]Again, although Deuteronomistic law (Deut 14:1) forbade the Israelites to make themselves bald as an act of mourning, the rite was known. See Lev 21:5; Isa 15:2; Jer 7:29; 16:6; 41:5; 47:5; 48:37; and Mic 1:16. Also compare the descriptions of Gilgamesh mourning the death of Enkidu (Gilg 8.2.21) and Achilles lamenting the death of Patroklos (*Iliad* 18.27; 23.46). For other Greek references, see the examples cited in LSJ, 935a, s. v. *keirō*, and E. Vermeule, *Aspects of Death in Early Greek Art and Poetry* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California, 1979), 63, and n. 46 on p. 227.

name, *ʾiyzebel*, means "where is *zĕbūl*?" that is, "where is the Prince?"[144] "Prince," *zĕbūl*, is a common epithet of Baal Haddu in Ugaritic myth. Jezebel's name thus indicates her devotion to Baal Haddu,[145] suggesting that the Baal of Carmel whose cult she promotes is none other than Baal Haddu.

The identification of the Baal of Carmel with Baal Haddu is strengthened by a statue found on Carmel which dates from the second or third century C.E.[146] An inscription on the statue's base dedicates the statue to "Heliopolitan Zeus, god of Carmel" (*dii hēliopoleitē karmēlō*). This Heliopolitan Zeus, as is obvious from his name, is solar in character; he is in addition a storm god. He shares these features with Nabatean Zeus Helios. And Nabatean sources regularly identify Zeus Helios with Baal Šamêm. This suggests that the god of Carmel is Baal Šamêm. Moreover, Baal Šamêm, most scholars believe, should be identified with Baal Haddu.[147] Baal Šamêm's cult symbols at Heliopolis include an ear of corn, indicating he is a fertility god, and a thunderbolt, a weapon of the storm god. Fertility and storm, of course, are the major attributes of Baal Haddu. Also Baal Šamêm is, according to Sakkunyaton, a storm god (*PE* 1.10.7). This further indicates that Baal Šamêm is Baal Haddu. Our equation reads: the god of Carmel equals Heliopolitan Zeus, Heliopolitan Zeus equals Nabatean Zeus Helios, Zeus Helios equals Baal Šamêm, Baal Šamêm equals Baal Haddu. We

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[144]Cf. the names *ʾyb*ʿ*l* "where is Baal?" (el-Ḥofra 141.2) and *ʾy*ʿ*zr*, "where is my help?" (Num 26:30). For more on these personal names with the element **ʾayya*, "where," see W. F. Albright, "Northwest-Semitic Names in a List of Egyptian Slaves from the Eighteenth Century B.C.," *JAOS* 74 (1954), 225–226; idem, "An Ostracon from Calah and the North–Israelite Diaspora," *BASOR* 149 (1958), 34, n. 12; H. B. Huffmon, *Amorite Personal Names in the Mari Texts: A Structural and Lexical Study* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1965), 161.

[145]Note also the element *b*ʿ*l* in the name of Jezebel's father, Ethbaal ("[he who is] with Baal") of Tyre.

[146]M. Avi-Yonah, "Mount Carmel and the God of Baalbek," *IEJ* 2 (1952), 118–124.

[147]Note, however, R. A. Oden, "Baʿal Šamêm and ʾĒl," *CBQ* 39 (1977), 457–473.

conclude that the god of Carmel is Baal Haddu.[148]

At Carmel the prophets of Baal Haddu, in their contest with Elijah, attempt to summon the storm god through cries and through a ritual dance (1 Kgs 18:26). When Baal fails to respond, Elijah mocks the prophets by asking if their god is on a journey or asleep (1 Kgs 18:27). Elijah in his mockery comes close to the mark. Baal Haddu is on a journey, to the kingdom of Môt. However, he is not asleep, he is dead. His prophets thus ritually gash their flesh, a typical mourning rite (1 Kgs 18:28). As we noted above, El and Anat both cut their flesh upon learning of Baal's death. The prophets of Baal on Carmel echo this mythic behavior in cultic ritual. The name of the prophets' patroness whispers ironically in our minds: *ʾiyzebel*, "where is the Prince?" The Prince, the text hints, is dead. His prophets demonstrate to us the proper cultic reaction: they mourn.

Hos 7:14 also suggests that the cutting of flesh is a mourning ritual practiced when Baal, the god of storm and fertility, fails. In that text Hosea, in a polemic against Baal worship, condemns the people for

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[148]O. Eissfeldt (*Der Gott Karmel* [Sitzungsberichte der deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, Klasse für Sprachen, Literatur und Kunst 1953, No. 1; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1953], 5, 22–23; "Baʿalšamêm und Jahwe," *ZAW* 57 [1939], 1–31); S. M. Olyan (*Asherah and the Cult of Yahweh*, 62–64); and Avi-Yonah ("Mount Carmel," *IEJ* 2 [1952], 118–124) are among those who identify the Baal of Carmel with Baal Šamêm. But R. de Vaux ("The Prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel," *The Bible and the Ancient Near East* [London: Darton, Longman, & Todd, 1972], 238–251); H. H. Rowley ("Elijah on Mount Carmel," *BJRL* 43 [1960–61], 190–219); and A. Alt ("Das Gottesurteil auf dem Karmel," *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel* 2 [München: C. H. Beck'sche, 1953], 135–149) propose that the Baal of Carmel is Tyrian Melqart. Others, for example K. Galling ("Die Gott Karmel und die Achtung der fremden Götter," *Geschichte und Altes Testament (Festschrift A. Alt)* [ed. G. Ebeling; Beiträge zur historischen Theologie 16; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1953], 105–125) and D. R. Ap-Thomas ("Elijah on Mount Carmel," *PEQ* 92 [1960], 146–155), doubt that any positive identification of the Baal of Carmel is possible. For further bibliography on this debate, see Rowley, "Elijah on Mount Carmel," *BJRL* 43 (1960–61), 194, n. 1 and 2. In my opinion the statue published by Avi-Yonah is decisive, not just for the Roman period, from which it comes, but for the Iron Age as well. Religious traditions, we note, are notoriously conservative.

gashing themselves[149] "for (want of) grain and wine." Here, as in 1 Kgs 18:28, when fertility and the fertility god languish, Baal's devotees ritually cut their flesh as a symbol of mourning.

Finally we turn to a text roughly contemporary with Ezek 8:14. Zech 12:10–11 reads:

> . . . When they look upon him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and cry bitterly over him, as one cries bitterly over a first-born. On that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as the mourning for Hadad-Rimmon in the valley of Megiddo.

The Hadad-Rimmon mourned at Megiddo is again none other than Baal Haddu. Indeed, the first element of the name, Hadad, is the Aramaic form of Haddu, the proper name of the storm god Baal. Rimmon is best taken as an epithet of the storm god. The verb *ramānu* in Akkadian means "to thunder." The epithet Rimmon, "the thunderer," is, of course, an excellent title for a storm god. Indeed, as J. C. Greenfield has pointed out, a Neo-Babylonain text (*CT* 24, 40, 43) lists as an attribute of Adad *ša rimmi*, "of the thunder"; other attributes listed include *ša urpiti*, "of the rain-clouds" (line 41), *ša birqi*, "of the lightning" (line 44), *ša riḫṣi*, "of the inundation" (line 45), and *ša zunni*, "of the rain" (line 46).[150] In another text analyzed by Greenfield (*CT* 25, 16, 24) ^{d}Ramimu is equated with ^{d}Adad.[151] The Bible, moreover, attests that Baal Haddu was worshiped as Rimmon in the Syrian realm (2 Kgs 5:18). That this Syrian god Rimmon is Baal Haddu is confirmed by the names of two Syrian kings found in the Bible, Tabrimmon and his son Ben-Hadad (1 Kgs 15:18). These names, Tabrimmon and Ben-Hadad, reflect the worship of the family god, Baal, under different epithets, Hadad and Rimmon.

Hadad-Rimmon in Zech 12:11 is thus a compound name, made up of the personal name of the god plus an epithet. Indeed, although some

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[149]Reading the root *gdd* with the G for MT *yitgōrārû*.

[150]For text and references, see J. C. Greenfield, "The Aramean God Rammān/Rimmōn," *IEJ* 26 (1976), 196 and n. 17.

[151]Greenfield, "Rammān/Rimmōn," *IEJ* 26 (1976), 197.

analyze the name Hadad-Rimmon as a place name, a town which bore the name of the storm god Baal (as Anathoth bore the name of the goddess Anat or as Elat bore the name of the goddess Asherah),[152] while others emend Zech 12:11 to read *bn 'mwn* "son of Amon" (Josiah, who was killed tragically in 609 B.C.E. at Megiddo),[153] most scholars accept the MT as it stands and take Hadad-Rimmon as the name of Baal himself. Surely, especially in the light of 1 Kgs 18:28; Hos 7:14; and the texts from Ugarit, this is best. These materials indicate that it is perfectly appropriate that the storm god be mourned as a part of his cult, which is consistent with the reference to mourning in Zech 12:11. Moreover, the valley of Megiddo, where the mourning mentioned in Zech 12:11 takes place, is a prime agricultural area and was in ancient times intensively farmed (as, indeed, it is today). Any threat to fertility or the fertility god would be something appropriately mourned at Megiddo. 1 Kgs 18:28 indicates that a tradition of lamenting the death of the fertility god, Baal, thrived in the region nearby Megiddo, at Mount Carmel, in the northwestern corner of the Megiddo plain. Given, then, that Hadad and Rimmon are both transparently analyzed as names of the storm god Baal, that mourning is a major component in the Iron Age cult of Baal, and that the valley of Megiddo is a place where mourning over the fertility god's demise would reasonably take place, it is clear that the Hadad-Rimmon mourned in Zech 12:11 is none other than the storm god Baal Haddu.

The implications of these analyses of 1 Kgs 18:28; Hos 7:14; and Zech 12:11 for the study of Ezek 8:14 are significant. I suggested above that the Tammuz cult, with its ritual lamentations over the death of the young fertility god, was easily imported into Canaan because the Canaanites already knew a myth of a dead fertility god whose passing was mourned in the cult. Ugaritic mythology, 1 Kgs 18:28; Hos 7:14; and Zech 12:11 confirm that this is so. When Tammuz worship came west from Mesopotamia beginning in the Bronze Age, the cult attracted some west Semites who recognized in the Tammuz cult echoes of

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[152]See the references collected by M. Delcor, "Deux passages difficiles: Zach XII 11 et XI 13," *VT* 3 (1953), 67–68.

[153]Delcor, "Deux passages difficiles," *VT* 3 (1953), 70–73.

native myths and rituals associated with the cult of Baal.

Moreover, we note again that it is the women of sixth-century Jerusalem who were particularly dedicated to the cult of Tammuz. It is hardly coincidental that women in the late seventh and sixth centuries were also especially devoted to the worship of the Queen of Heaven. These women who worshiped the Queen were familiar with east Semitic rites which involved, for example, baking *kawwānîm* for Ištar. It is not at all surprising that these women, or their compatriots, were prepared to incorporate into their worship of Queen Ištar-Astarte another aspect of Ištar's mythology, her mourning over her dead lover, Tammuz. Because of her syncretism with Astarte, Ištar was a familiar goddess in the West. And because her cult was familiar and non-threatening, her devotees were willing to integrate aspects of the mythology of Ištar's lover, Tammuz, into their native religion.

The worship of Tammuz thus found a place in sixth-century Jerusalem for two reasons. First, Tammuz worship was adopted by the sixth-century worshipers of the Queen of Heaven, who practiced the Tammuz cult as part of their devotions to Queen Ištar-Astarte. Second, the Tammuz cult resonated familiarly with sixth-century worshipers of Baal, who saw in Tammuz a fertility god like Baal, who died and was mourned. Particularly noteworthy is Zech 12:11, which indicates that in the fifth century, at Megiddo, there was a tradition of lamenting the death of the storm god Baal. Surely this tradition was known and, as Ezek 8:14 demonstrates, practiced in sixth-century Jerusalem.

But what of Ezekiel's reaction? Ezekiel insists upon the prophetic dictum of "Yahweh alone." As such, the prophet cannot tolerate those women who worship Tammuz as an element of their worship of the Queen of Heaven. Like Jeremiah, Ezekiel has no tolerance for those who attempt to supplement their worship of Yahweh by burning incense, pouring out libations, and making cakes for the Queen of Heaven, nor has he patience with those who mourn the Queen's deceased lover, Tammuz. The prophetic demand that Yahweh requires an exclusive relationship with his people leaves Ezekiel no place in his religious worship for the cults of the Queen of Heaven and her Mesopotamian lover, Tammuz.

Probably even more repulsive to Ezekiel than Tammuz's relationship

to the cult of the Queen of Heaven were the similarities between the cult of Tammuz and Baal worship. The tendency of the people to worship Baal alongside the cult of Yahweh was something against which the prophetic class continually found itself fighting. We associate the clash between the prophetic proponents of "pure" Yahwism and the worshipers of Baal particularly with the ninth- and eighth-century prophets Elijah and Hosea. But Baal worship certainly continued to threaten the exclusive claims of Yahwistic religion in the late seventh and sixth centuries. We can see this particularly in the book of Jeremiah, where the cult of Baal is frequently condemned by the prophet (Jer 2:8, 23; 7:9; 9:13; 11:13, 17; 12:16; 19:5; 23:13, 27; 32:29, 35). Although some of Jeremiah's words refer to Baal worship in past eras of Israelite history, the prophet clearly indicates that Baal worship was an ongoing concern in Jerusalem at the end of the pre-exilic period. Ezekiel certainly would have been repulsed by this sixth-century Baal worship and also by the kindred worship of the god Tammuz.

Moreover, the element of the Baal cult which is alluded to in Ezek 8:14, the death and mourning of the fertility god, is something wholly repulsive to Yahwistic religion as espoused by the prophets. It is a tenet of prophetic Yahwism that Yahweh was the "living god" (*ʾēl ḥay*), not susceptible to a change in seasons or the summer drought. Ezekiel, priest and prophet of this living god, is surely horrified by the people's willingness to worship a dying god of fertility.

It is no wonder, then, that Ezekiel places the worship of Tammuz third on his list of four cultic abominations. The worship of Tammuz reminds the prophet of the cults of the Queen of Heaven and of Baal, both of which threaten in the sixth century the exclusive relationship that Yahweh, according to Ezekiel, demands of his people. Furthermore, the cult of Tammuz professes a creed that gods die and that with their death their power is erased. This creed is anathema to Yahwists like Ezekiel. That the sovereignty of Yahweh is challenged and that the belief in a dying god is proclaimed at the very entrance to the inner court of Yahweh's temple is, for Ezekiel, a final insult. Only one thing could be worse: to find the people totally rejecting Yahweh within the confines of Yahweh's own temple. And this, of course, is exactly what Ezekiel confronts in the final ritual seen in his temple

vision.

Bowing Down to the Sun

After observing the women sitting at the northern gateway of the temple's inner court wailing over Tammuz, Ezekiel, in his vision, enters the courtyard itself. Although there was much cultic furniture located in the inner court (e. g., the "molten sea" [1 Kgs 7:23–26; 2 Chr 4:2–5] and the ten bronze wagons which held lavers [1 Kgs 7:27–37]), the courtyard was surely dominated by the large bronze altar (twenty cubits by twenty by ten; 2 Chr 4:1) which sat in its center (1 Kgs 8:22, 64; 9:25; 2 Kgs 16:14–15; Ezek 40:47; 43:13–17; 2 Chr 4:1). It is between this altar and the vestibule of the temple itself that Ezekiel sees the final observance condemned in Ezekiel 8. Twenty men[154] stand between the altar and the temple facing east, with their backs turned toward the temple and their faces turned toward the morning sky. There, they worship the sun.

There is, among scholars, no consensus on whether the worship of the sun described in Ezek 8:16 is in origin an Egyptian, a Mesopotamian, or a native west Semitic cult.[155] Still, least likely is the suggestion that the solar cult witnessed by Ezekiel is Egyptian in origin.[156] Those who argue for the Egyptian character of the Jerusalem solar cult point primarily to the fact that Solomon's temple was oriented along an east-west axis.[157] This east-west orientation was dictated by the Phoenicians from Tyre who built Solomon's temple; the Tyrians were, in turn, influenced by the Egyptians, with whom they had long interacted. Thus, it is proposed, Solomon's temple reflects an Egyptian

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[154]On the number of men in the temple courtyard, see above, n. 34, and the discussion below, pp. 94–95.

[155]Note the discussion of Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 1, 243–244.

[156]An Egyptian origin for Ezekiel's solar cult is urged especially by Fohrer, *Ezechiel*, 52; see also Carley, *Ezekiel*, 56.

[157]Cf. the so-called "solar shrine" at Lachish and the temple at Arad. See O. Tufnell, *Lachish* 3, *The Iron Age*, Part 1, *Text* (London: Oxford University, 1953), 141–145; Y. Aharoni, "Trial Excavation in the 'Solar Shrine' at Lachish. Preliminary Report," *IEJ* 18 (1968), 157–164.

sun cult, as mediated through Phoenicia. But even if a theory of Egyptian influence is the correct explanation of the Jerusalem temple's east-west orientation,[158] it is quite a leap from Solomon's Jerusalem to the sixth-century solar cult of Ezekiel. Without more evidence of Egyptian elements in the temple cult, especially evidence from the time of Ezekiel 8, the theory that Ezekiel witnesses Egyptian solar worship in Ezek 8:16 must be discounted.

It is possible to regard the cult of solar worship in sixth-century Jerusalem as Mesopotamian in nature. W. Eichrodt, for example, has suggested that the men worshiping the sun in the temple courtyard in 592 B.C.E. did so in an effort to appease their Babylonian conquerors. By worshiping a Babylonian god, Šamaš, the god of the sun, they hoped to convince the Babylonian overlords of their loyalty and peaceful intentions.[159] Alternatively, it has often been proposed that sun worship in Jerusalem was an Assyrian cult, introduced by Manasseh in the seventh century. Particularly noteworthy is the reference to the horses and chariots of the sun in 2 Kgs 23:11. In Assyria the epithet *rākib narkābti*, "chariot rider," is commonly associated with the solar cult. Proponents of the view that an Assyrian cult is the object of solar worship in Ezek 8:16 acknowledge that the cult was abolished in the last quarter of the seventh century by Josiah's reform, but suggest that the cult re-emerged in Judah after the reforms of Josiah lapsed.[160] In addition, those who see the sun cult in Ezek 8:16 as Assyrian, as well as those who see it as Babylonian, frequently point out that some Greek manuscripts number the cultic participants as "twenty" (MT: "twenty-five"). "Twenty" is a number holy to Šamaš in Mesopotamia.[161]

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[158]It is quite possible that the explanation is correct. Certainly, the Phoenicians, who built Solomon's temple, had long-established cultural ties with Egypt. Moreover, the administrative structure adopted by Solomon in his government seems to draw on Egyptian models, further suggesting the probability of Egyptian influence in Solomonic Jerusalem.

[159]Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 127.

[160]The fullest presentation of this thesis is that of Cooke, *Ezekiel*, 99.

[161]See the references listed in N. Sarna, "Psalm XIX and the Near Eastern Sun-God Literature," *Fourth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Papers* 1

But there are problems with proposing that Ezekiel's cult of sun worship is Mesopotamian (whether Assyrian or Babylonian) in nature. While I do prefer the G "twenty" to MT "twenty-five" (MT is a secondary assimilation to Ezek 11:1), the Greek evidence can hardly be used to argue for a Mesopotamian cult in Ezek 8:16. Moreover, the supposition that the Judahite solar cult was Assyrian in character, introduced by Manasseh in the seventh century, is highly suspect. Manasseh, it is true, is accused by the biblical writers of worshiping the host of heaven (2 Kgs 21:3, 5), but there is no mention in the Bible of a solar cult *per se* introduced under the influence of Judah's Assyrian overlords. Indeed, M. Cogan and J. McKay have recently questioned the assumption that Assyria imposed religious obligations on its vassals.[162] Cogan, in particular, has used Assyrian evidence to demonstrate that vassal states under native rule, such as Judah, were not obliged to adopt Assyrian cults. Cogan has also noted that the Assyrian solar epithet *rākib narkābti*, "chariot rider," often used to equate the horses and chariots removed from the temple by Josiah with an Assyrian cult, is not in fact an epithet of Assyrian Šamaš, the Mesopotamian sun god, but rather a title of Šamaš' counselor, Bunene.[163] The proposed parallel between Josiah's horses and chariots and Assyrian cultic language is thereby weakened. In short, while both Cogan and McKay admit that there might be Assyrian influence present in seventh- and sixth-century Israelite religion, they would both insist that the cult of the solar deity is essentially west Semitic in nature.

Certainly there was in Syria-Palestine an indigenous tradition of sun worship.[164] From early in the Israelite period the Bible attests to the place names En-Shemesh (Josh 15:7; 18:17), a spring on the border between Judah and Benjamin, Bêt-Shemesh (Josh 15:10; 1 Sam 6:9; 1 Kgs 4:9; etc.), a city west and slightly south of Jerusalem whose very

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(Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1967), 175, n. 87.

[162]Cogan, *Imperialism*, especially pp. 84–87; McKay, *Religion in Judah*, especially pp. 47–59.

[163]Cogan, *Imperialism*, 85, n. 106.

[164]Well summarized in M. Smith, "Helios in Palestine," *Eretz Israel* 16 (1982), 199*–214*.

name means "temple of the sun god," and possibly (although there are textual problems) Ir-Shemesh (Josh 19:41). Also from the League period comes the personal name Samson (*šimšôn*), a name which has as its theophoric element the name of the sun god. Extra-biblical data of note include the place name Šamaš-Edom, a town mentioned on Thutmose III's Palestinian town-list from Karnak.[165] The cult of the sun in Late Bronze Age Palestine is also known from the Amarna letters; in the Amarna material the solar deity is feminine.

Also at Ugarit the solar deity was a goddess, Šapšu. In Ugaritic mythological texts Šapšu is a minor deity, playing an important role only in one tablet of the Baal cycle, *CTA* 6. In *CTA* 6.1–4 it is Šapšu who recovers the corpse of the storm god Baal from the underworld on behalf of Baal's sister/consort, Anat, and it is Šapšu who is subsequently sent by El and Anat to search for the resurrected fertility god. Later in the cycle, in *CTA* 6.6, Šapšu rebukes Môt, who is in the midst of battle with Baal, and Môt immediately withdraws from the fight, leaving Baal victorious. *CTA* 6.6 concludes with a hymn in praise of Šapšu, evidentially celebrating her role in returning Baal to life and in defeating Môt (*CTA* 6.6.45–48). The hymn proclaims Šapšu as the one who judges[166] the dead in the underworld. In short, this mythic

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[165]See *ANET* (3d ed.), 243a, and the bibliography listed there.

[166]*CTA* 6.6.44–45 reads:

špš rpim thtk
špš thtk ilnym

The crux here is *thtk*, which, although taken by some as the preposition *tht* with the second-person suffix, to be translated "under you" (e. g., A. Caquot, "La divinité solaire ougaritiques," *Syria* 36 [1959], 97–98; G. R. Driver, *Canaanite Myths*, 81), is seen by others as a verb. Some of this latter group, comparing *Ugaritica* 5, 2, lines 8, 10, translate *htk* as "to rule" (e. g., M. Astour, "The Nether World and its Denizens at Ugarit," *Death in Mesopotamia* [ed. B. Alster; Mesopotamia 8; Copenhagen: Akademisk forlag, 1980], 232). But, as F. M. Cross has made clear ("The Canaanite Cuneiform Tablet from Taanach," *BASOR* 190 [1968], 45, n. 24), the meaning of *htk* is not "to rule," but rather "to cut," "to decide (a case)," "to determine." The function ascribed to Šapšu in *CTA* 6.6.44–45 thus is the role of judge in the underworld. Such a tradition is perfectly consistent with what we know of the role of Šamaš as the divine judge in Mesopotamia.

material describes the sun as a goddess who, in her travels across the daytime sky, sees all that goes on beneath her (for example, the resurrected Baal), and who, in her nighttime journey in the underworld, interacts closely with the dead.[167]

In cultic materials from Ugarit Šapšu's close relationship with the dead is also attested. "The Ugaritic Funerary Text" (RS 34.126) is a ritual tablet in which participants summon the deceased kings of Ugarit and pour out to them libations. Šapšu, as the goddess who travels through both the realm of the living and the realm of the dead, is invoked (lines 18–19) to carry these libations from the living down into the underworld. This role of Canaanite Šapšu in the cult of the dead is consistent with the role of the sun god, Šamaš, in Mesopotamian mythology.[168] Elsewhere at Ugarit, sacrifices to Šapšu are prescribed.[169]

But is this Canaanite solar deity the sun god worshiped in the temple courtyard in Ezek 8:16? As we have seen, Šapšu is a deity of relatively minor importance at Ugarit, and, moreover, a female. It seems unlikely that this minor female deity could present a serious challenge to Yahweh in sixth-century Jerusalem. Moreover, the sun goddess at Ugarit seems to have as one of her primary responsibilities a role in the cult of the dead, but there is no death-cult imagery in Ezek 8:16. Finally, we note that in the Iron Age extra-biblical evidence for a native west Semitic solar cult is sparse. It has been suggested that the models of horses, wheels, and chariots which have been found at numerous Iron Age Palestinian sites[170] are votive objects dedicated to the sun, similar to the horses and chariots dedicated to the sun in the temple in

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[167]On the place of Šapšu in the Ugaritic cult of the dead, see further Lewis, *Cults*, 35–37, 40–46.

[168]On RS 34.126 and Šapšu's role in that text, see, most recently, Lewis, *Cults*, 22–24, 35–46.

[169]For example, *CTA* 34.12; 35.47.

[170]See the catalogue in McKay, *Religion of Judah*, 33, and 100, nn. 40–42; also note G. W. Ahlstrom, *An Archaeological Picture of Iron Age Religions in Ancient Palestine* (StudOr 55:3; Helsinki: Helsingin yliopiston monistuspalvelu, 1984), 12–13, 22–23.

Jerusalem. This is possible but not certain.[171] More secure is epigraphical evidence attesting to the worship of the sun in the Aramaean realm. Šamaš is listed among a list of gods in the Zakkur inscription (*KAI* 202.B.23–26), in the inscriptions of Panamu I (*KAI* 214.2, 11) and Panamu II (*KAI* 215.22), and in the inscriptions from Sefire (*KAI* 222.A.9) and Nerab (*KAI* 225.9). Among the Aramaeans, it seems, Šamaš was a popular god. It may be, then, that M. Cogan is correct in his suggestion that the Iron Age sun cult in Israel was an Aramaean cult which combines elements of Mesopotamian Šamaš worship and native west Semitic traditions.[172]

We conclude that while it seems clear that the solar cult witnessed by Ezekiel is not Egyptian, it is impossible to decide whether solar worship in seventh and sixth-century Judah is a Mesopotamian or a west Semitic cult, or whether, perhaps, the Jerusalem cult incorporates elements from both Mesopotamia and the West (as I would suggest). But in a sense our failure to identify the precise nature of Ezekiel's solar cult does not really matter. It is not important to Ezekiel whether the cult in question is a Mesopotamian or a west Semitic one, or whether sixth-century solar worship in Jerusalem is a syncretism between these two cults. Rather, what is crucial to Ezekiel is that those who practice the sun cult in the courtyard of Yahweh's temple turn their backs to the temple as part of their worship. In turning their backs on the temple, they turn their backs on Yahweh. Ezekiel interprets this gesture as a rejection of the Israelite national god in favor of another deity (2 Chr 29:6).

Moreover, as was originally suggested by A. Bertholet, the men Ezekiel envisions in the temple courtyard may be priests.[173] Although this thesis cannot be proven,[174] it is an appealing suggestion. In Joel 2:17 we read that one of the responsibilities of the temple priesthood on fast days was to stand in the inner court between the altar and the

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[171]See the cautions of Cogan, *Imperialism*, 87, n. 125.

[172]Cogan, *Imperialism*, 84–87.

[173]Bertholet, *Hesekiel*, 49–50.

[174]Note the cautions of Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 127; also, especially, Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 1, 243.

temple, facing west, toward the holy-of-holies. There, the priests were to intercede with Yahweh on behalf of the people. If the men whom Ezekiel sees in the temple courtyard are priests, then the sin in Ezek 8:16 is a compound one: Yahweh's priests turn their backs both on God and on calling. To the priest/prophet Ezekiel, this is surely anathema.

It should come as no surprise, then, that Ezekiel finds the worship of the sun to be Judah's greatest cultic abomination. Indeed, the manifestation of popular religion which Ezekiel sees in Ezek 8:16 becomes in rabbinic Judaism a metaphor for faithlessness. In a thinly-veiled allusion to Ezek 8:16, Tractate Sukka, v.2–4, describes the feast of Tabernacles:

> When they reached the east gate they turned their backs from east to west and said, "Our fathers who were in this place turned their backs on the temple and their faces toward the east and worshiped the sun toward the east, but we, our eyes are turned toward Yah." R. Jehuda says, "They repeated again and again, 'We belong to Yah and raise our eyes to Yah.'"

3. "SHALL I BE APPEASED FOR THESE THINGS?" ISAIAH 57

One of the most remarkable descriptions of sixth-century popular religion found in the prophetic literature is Isa 57:3–13.[1] The poet of Isa 57:3–13 attacks several different cults, cults whose natures are in some cases obvious and in others obscure, hidden in the ambiguity of allusion. Cults of child sacrifice and fertility cults are clearly condemned; T. J. Lewis has recently pointed out multiple references to cults of the dead in the poem.[2] But it is not only the poet's descriptions of popular cults which make Isa 57:3–13 so fascinating; the prosody,

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[1]Commentators generally consider Isa 57:3–13 to be a poetic unit. The shift in content and grammar following v 13 demarcates clearly the end of the poem; similarly, the disjunctive *wĕ'attem* at the beginning of v 3 indicates the beginning of a new poetic stanza. But the place of Isa 57:3–13 in its larger context is unclear. While many commentators regard the poem as an independent unit, others see Isa 57:3–13 as the second stanza of a long poem which runs from Isa 56:9–57:13. The issue is not one which need overly concern us here, but I do suspect that those who hold that Isa 57:3–13 is part of a larger unit are correct. In particular, P. D. Hanson's analysis (*The Dawn of Apocalyptic* [2d ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979], 187–189) of 57:3–13 as an expansion of 56:9–57:2 is appealing. Such an analysis would explain, for example, the use of *miškāb* in Isa 56:9–57:13. *miškāb* occurs both in 56:9–57:2, the first unit, and in the second unit, 57:3–13 (twice), but in very different contexts and with very different meanings. If 57:3–13 were an expansion of 56:9–57:2, *miškāb* then functions as something like a *Stichwort*. It binds the two units together but, because of its different meanings, indicates the independence of each stanza.

[2]*Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit* (HSM 39; Atlanta: Scholars, 1989), 143–158; also idem, "Death Cult Imagery in Isaiah 57," *Hebrew Annual Review* 11 (1987), 267–284.

with its richness of imagery and its frequent paronomasia, is appealing, and the many parallels with Canaanite myth hold special meaning for the student of west Semitic religions.

The poem reads:

(3)	*wʾtm qrbw hnh*	But you, draw near,
	bny ʿnnh[3]	you sons of a sorceress,
	zrʿ mnʾpt wznh[4]	seed of an adulteress and a harlot;
(4)	*ʿl my ttʿngw*	at whom do you jeer,
	ʿl my trḥybw ph	at whom do you open your mouth,
	tʾrykw lšwn	do you stick out your tongue?
	hlwʾ ʾtm yldy pšʿ	Are you not children of transgression,
	zrʿ šqr	offspring of deceit,
(5)	*hnḥmym*[5] *bʾlym*[6]	who burn with lust among the terebinths,

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[3]G *huioi anomoi* reflects Hebrew *ʿwn*, rather than MT *ʿnn*. G has undoubtedly mistaken the somewhat unusual *ʿnn* for the more common *ʿwn*. For other instances of the Poel participle of *ʿnn* without the performative *mēm*, see Isa 2:6 and Jer 27:9.

[4]MT *mnʾp wtznh* has occasioned much comment. The literal translation, "seed of an adulterer and she played the harlot," is obviously nonsensical. Most commentators thus emend to **mnʾp wznh*, based on the G *moichon kai pornēs*, and translate, "seed of an adulterer and a harlot." I prefer to read **mnʾpt wznh*. The corruption of this original text began when a misplaced word divider yielded *mnʾp twznh*. This corrupt text begat further error, as corrupt texts so often do; in this case a metathesis of *wāw* and *tāw* yielded MT *mnʾp wtznh*. The reconstructed **bny ʿnnh zrʿ mnʾpt wznh* yields a list of three feminine participles.

[5]G *hoi parakalountes* reflects the common root *nḥm* rather than the Niphal of *ḥmm*, which occurs only here.

[6]G reads *epi ta eidōla*, reflecting Hebrew *bāʾēlīm*, "gods." Although both the consonantal and pointed text of the Hebrew allow such a reading, evidence suggests that the more traditional *ʾēlīm*, "terebinths," is to be read. The parallel member to *ʾēlīm, kol ʿeṣ raʿănān*, "every green tree," indicates that *ʾēlīm*, "terebinths," is the correct reading; the presence of the parallel members *bannĕḥālīm* and *taḥat sĕʿipê hassĕlāʿîm* in 57:5b demonstrates that we should expect *parallelismus membrorum* in v 5a. Moreover, elsewhere in Isaiah the Greek translator fails to understand Hebrew *ʾēlīm*, "terebinths." In Isa 1:29 *ʾēlīm* occurs in the Hebrew text in a context where it can only mean

	tḥt klʿṣ rʿnn	under every green tree,
	šḥṭy ḥyldym bnḥlym	who slaughter children in wadis,
	tḥt sʿpy ḥslʿym[7]	among the clefts of the rocks?
(6)	*bḥlqy*[8] *nḥl ḥlqk*	With the perished of the wadi is your portion,
	hm[9] *hm gwrlk*	they, they are your lot.

"terebinths," as indicated by the parallel *gannôt* and by the pun with *ʾēlâ*, "terebinth," in v 30. The G, however, reads *epi tois eidōlois*. This confirms that the G should be taken as none too reliable in Isa 57:5. Also note that the activity going on among the terebinths in Isa 1:29 has to do with "desire, lust, pleasure" (*ḥmd*), which is precisely the same activity going on in Isa 57:5 (*ḥmm*). This indicates that the locus of the activity should likewise be the same in both places; namely, "among the terebinths." Still, the G does point to a pun on "terebinths" and "gods" which is implicit in the verse; see below, pp. 152–153.

[7]For MT *tḥt sʿpy ḥslʿym*, G reads *ana meson tōn petrōn*. M. Weise ("Jesaja 57 5f.," *ZAW* 72 [1960], 26, 28) has questioned whether G *ana meson* accurately reflects the Hebrew *taḥat*; to Weise, *taḥat* used in a locative context means "under" and thus should be translated by G *hypo*. Moreover, Weise, based on this understanding of *taḥat* as meaning only "under" when used in a locative context, finds *taḥat* and *bĕ* to be inappropriate parallels in Isa 57:5b. This leads Weise to adopt a rather awkward and multi-bracketed translation:

> Die ihr euch [vor Gier] entzündet bei den mächtigen Bäumen, [d. h.] unter jedem immergrünen Baum,
> Die ihr Kinder schlachtet in den Klüften, [die sich] unter Felsvorsprüngen [befinden].

But, as J. C. Greenfield ("The Prepositions B ..... Taḥat ..... in Jes 57 5," *ZAW* 73 [1961], 226–228) has pointed out, *taḥat* has, as do most Semitic prepositions, a wide range of meanings; e. g., "under," "at," and "among." The translation "among" fits well with the context in Isa 57:5b, and it has been adopted here. Note that "among" is quite satisfactorily reflected by the G *ana meson*. Further note, *contra* Weise, that *taḥat* and *bĕ* are appropriate parallels. Greenfield cites *CTA* 17.5.6–7; also, in the Hebrew Bible, see Ps 91:4 and Job 40:21.

[8]W. H. Irwin ("The Smooth Stones of the Wady'? Isaiah 57,6," *CBQ* 29 [1967], 32–33), followed by Lewis, *Cults*, 148, and "Death Cult Imagery," *Hebrew Annual Review* 11 (1987), 272, take *bḥlqy* from Ugaritic *ḫlq*, "to perish," parallel to *mt*, "to die," in *CTA* 5.6.9–10 (with a parallel version in *CTA* 6.1.41–43). For a full discussion of this reading, see below, pp. 146–148.

[9]F. M. Cross has suggested (private communication) reading the first *hm* of

	gm lhm špkt nsk	Even to them you have poured out a libation,
	hʿlyt mnḥh	you have offered up an offering.
	hʿl ʾlh ʾnḥm[10]	Shall I be appeased for these things?
(7)	*ʿl hr gbh wnśʾ*	On a mountain high and lofty
	śmt mškbk	you set up your bed.
	gm šm ʿlyt	There you went up
	lzbḥ zbḥ	to offer sacrifice.
(8)	*wʾḥr hdlt whmzwzh*	And behind the door and the doorpost
	śmt zkrwnk	you set up your symbol.
	ky mʾyt[11] *glyt*	For a hundred times you stripped,

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this colon as Ugaritic *hm*, "behold." This suggestion is attractive in the light of the Canaanite imagery and vocabulary used throughout Isa 57:3–13. See Irwin, "Smooth Stones," *CBQ* 29 (1967), 33–37; Lewis, *Cults*, 148 and n. 76 on that page.

[10]This colon disturbs many commentators. Many seek to move it to the end of v 7; so, for example, M. Weise ("Jesaja 57 5f.," *ZAW* 72 [1960], 26) and C. Westermann (*Isaiah 40–66* [Old Testament Library; London: SCM, 1969], 321); others, following B. Duhm (*Das Buch Jesaia* [HKAT; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1902], 388) propose deleting the phrase altogether. A more nuanced view is that of P. D. Hanson (*Dawn*, 193, n. r), who suggests either that the colon is extra-metrical or that the colon parallel to *hʿl ʾlh ʾnḥm* has been lost. Hanson may very well be correct; whatever the case, with no textual support for deleting or moving the colon, I prefer to leave it in the text at the end of v 6.

[11]MT *mʾty*. As pointed, this word means "from me," but to make sense of the form in context requires a highly interpretive meaning. J. McKenzie, for example, translates, "for leaving me, you have uncovered yourself," although he admits that this is "unsatisfactory" (*Second Isaiah* [AB 20; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1968], 156). Other, such as G. R. Driver ("Isaianic Problems," *Festschrift für Wilhelm Eilers* [ed. G. Wiessner; Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1967], 52) and P. D. Hanson (*Dawn*, 190–191) repoint the following *gilīt* as *gālīt* and translate, "from me you have departed." This is certainly possible, but suffers literarily from the loss of the allusion to nakedness found in the Piel *gillīt*. I thus prefer to follow A. Fitzgerald ("Hebrew *yd* = 'Love' and 'Beloved,'" *CBQ* 29 [1967], 372); J. J. Scullion ("Some Difficult Texts in Isaiah cc.56–66 in the Light of Modern Scholarship," *UF* 4 [1973], 111); and D. N. Freedman (as reported by McKenzie, *Second Isaiah*, 156) and emend *mʾty* to **mʾyt*. **mʾyt* is analyzed as a Piel denominative from *mēʾâ*, meaning "to do a hundred times." The existence of denominative *mēʾâ* in biblical Hebrew was first proposed by M. Dahood in "Hebrew-Ugaritic Lexicography IV," *Bib* 47 (1966),

wtʿly hrḥbt mškbk	and you mounted and spread out your bed.
wtkrt[12] *lk mhm*	You . . . yourself from them,

413, and in *Psalms* 1 (AB 16; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), 142. Here, the verb is used in hendyasis with *gillīt*, with the resultant translation: "a hundred times you stripped."

[12]The MT reads *wtkrt*, the third-person feminine singular or second-person masculine singular of *kārat*, but a second-person feminine singular form is required by context. It is either necessary to assume *scriptio defectiva* and repoint or to supply the final vowel letter, as does 1QIsa[a]. But there are still problems: *kārat* is a transitive verb, often taking the direct object *bĕrît*, but no direct object is immediately obvious here. Many commentators (e. g., Hanson, *Dawn*, 193, n. tt; McKenzie, *Second Isaiah*, 157; Scullion, "Some Difficult Texts," *UF* 4 [1973], 111–112) suggest that there is an ellipsis of *bĕrît* and thus translate, "you have made a covenant with them for yourself." Such an ellipsis is possible (see 1 Sam 11:12; 20:16; 22:8; 1 Kgs 8:9; 2 Chr 7:18), but to translate *mēhem* as "with them" is difficult, if not impossible. Therefore others (e. g., Driver, *Festschrift Eilers*, 53) repoint the verb *ʾāhabt* as a noun in construct, *ʾahăbat*, and take *ʾahăbat miškābām* as the direct object of *kārat*. Driver translates, "thou hast cut off for thyself from them the amours of their bed(s)" = "thou hast detached for thyself . . . " = "thou hast snatched for thyself . . . " = "thou hast enjoyed illicit intercourse with them"; the likelihood of this translation decreases in direct proportion to the number of equal signs employed.

Many thus choose to emend. Most commonly scholars, following B. Duhm (*Das Buch Jesaia*, 389), read *kārâ*, "to acquire by trade," for *kārat*, and translate "and you bought for yourself from them the amour of their bed"; *ʾāhabt*, in this interpretation, is again repointed as the *nomen regens*, *ʾahăbat*. The basis cited for this emendation is Hos 3:2, where Hosea says of Gomer, *wāʾekkĕrehā lî*, "and I bought her for myself." This emendation, however, does not immediately clarify Isa 57:8c. Although the context (prostitution) is similar, one must posit in Isa 57:8c that there is a reversal of the customary practice of prostitutes and that the prostitute, not her customers, makes the financial outlay (cf. Ezek 16:32–34). Moreover, there are grammatical problems in the Hosea passage on which the emendation is based. For a full discussion, see F. I. Anderson and D. N. Freedman, *Hosea* (AB 24; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980), 298–299; for our purposes, it is sufficient to note that the very existence of the root *krh* in Hos 3:2 has been called into question.

Other interpretations of *wtkrt*(*y*), such as those of A. Fitzgerald ("Hebrew *yd*," *CBQ* 29 [1967], 66) and P. Volz (*Jesaia* 2 [KAT 9; Leipzig: A. Deichertsche, 1932], 212), are even more speculative and interpretive than are

ʾhbt[13] *mškbm*	the love of their bed,
yd[14] *ḥzyt*[15]	the phallus that you envisioned.

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those outlined above. In the face of such uncertainty, I prefer to leave the verb untranslated.

[13]Many commentators, based on their interpretations of *wtkrt*(*y*) (see above, n. 12), repoint *ʾhbt*, pointed in the MT as a verb, *ʾāhabt*, as a nominal form in the construct state, *ʾahăbat*. But regardless of the meaning of *wtkrt*(y), it is tempting to repoint *ʾāhabt* as a noun. In one of the best-known passages of the Baal cycle from Ugarit, *CTA* 4.4.38–39, El, after asking Asherah if she would like food or drink, inquires seductively:

hm yd il mlk yḫssk	Or does the love/rod of El, the King, excite you,
ahbt ṯr tʿrrk	the love of the Bull arouse you?

The parallelism of the nouns *yd* and *ahbt* in a sexual context at Ugarit suggests that *yd* and *ʾhbt* are parallel nominal forms in Isa 57:8c. This would further suggest that those who would delete *yd ḥzyt*, the final phrase of v 8c, or see it as a gloss (e. g., Driver, *Festschrift Eilers*, 54; Hanson, *Dawn*, 193, n. u; W. Kessler, *Gott geht es um das Ganze* [Die Botschaft des Alten Testaments 19; Stuttgart: Calwer, 1967], 28), are incorrect. However, the degree of uncertainty which must accompany any translation of Isa 57:8c means that the reliance on the Ugaritic parallel cannot be taken as a surety.

[14]There has been much debate on the meaning of *yād* in v 8c. McKenzie (*Second Isaiah*, 158) believes that *yād* here means "symbol" or "monument," as in the stories of Absalom's pillar (2 Sam 18:18) and of Saul's monument (1 Sam 15:12). There is some appeal in reading "monument" here, for the mention of a monument in v 8c would make a nice inclusio with *zkrwn*, the memorial which was erected in v 8a. That both these terms for monument have an underlying sexual connotation (the root *zkr* has to do both with memorials and males; *yd* can mean both "monument" and "phallus") is also appealing. (See Lewis, *Cults*, 150; idem, "Death Cult Imagery," *Hebrew Annual Review* 11 [1987], 274). But *yād* "monument," parallel to *ʾahăbat*, "love," (see above, n. 13) is not very compelling; rather, the parallel suggests that here, as in *CTA* 4.4.38–39, we should translate *yād* as either "love" or "phallus."

Those who prefer the meaning love in Isa 57:8c have two problems: (1) the meaning "love" for *yd*, instead of *ydd*, is unattested elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible (but see M. Dahood, *CBQ* 17 [1955], 104, and, in particular, Fitzgerald, "Hebrew *yd*," *CBQ* 29, [1967], *passim*); in the cognate languages *ydd*/*wdd* with a double *dālet* is expected, and (2) the verb, *ḥzyt*, fits poorly with *yd*, "love"; Scullion ("Some Difficult Texts," *UF* 4 [1973], 112), for example, is forced to interpret, "you have gazed upon lust."

(9) *wtšry*[16] *lmlk*[17] *bšmn* — You anointed the *mulk*- sacrifice with oil,

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Most then prefer to translate *yd* as "phallus." The meaning "phallus" for *yd* is unparalleled in biblical Hebrew (but see Cant 5:4 and the comments of M. H. Pope, *Song of Songs* [AB 7c; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1977], 517–518). But *yād* can mean "phallus" in the Hebrew of Qumrân and in the cognate languages, especially Ugaritic (see M. Delcor, "Two Special Meanings of the Word *yd* in Biblical Hebrew," *JSS* 12 [1967], 235–236, 238–239). In *CTA* 23.33–35 we read *tirkm yd il* parallel to *ark yd il*, both of which mean "El's rod is long" or "El's power grew great." Indeed, F. M. Cross (*Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic. Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1973], 23, n. 56) has suggested that the two repetitions of the phrase indicate that both meanings of *yd*, "phallus" and "power," are implicit in the text. A less immediate parallel, but still a germane one, is Gilg 6.69, where Gilgamesh quotes Ištar as saying to one of her lovers, *u qat-ka ut-te-ṣa-am-ma lu-pu-ut ḫar-da-at-ni*, "and bring forth your 'hand,' touch our 'waist.'"

[15]If I am correct that *ʾhbt* and *yd* are parallel nominal forms, then, for the sake of good parallelism, *yd ḥzyt*, like *ʾhbt mškbm*, should be an object phrase. I have thus translated "the phallus that you envisioned." On this construction, see W. H. Irwin ("Smooth Stones," *CBQ* 29 [1967], 33) and J. J. Scullion ("Some Difficult Texts," *UF* 4 [1973], 110), both of whom have pointed out that the sequence of noun in construct followed by a finite verb is attested in Ugaritic. C. Gordon (*Ugaritic Textbook* [Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1965], 8.16 [p. 56]) has cited *y att irtḫ*, "O wives whom I have married," in *CTA* 23:64 and *ybn ašld*, "O sons whom I have begotten," in *CTA* 23:65 as examples; in addition, he points out that the sequence occurs in Gen 1:1; Hos 1:2; and Num 3:1 in the Hebrew Bible. For numerous other examples of the construction in biblical Hebrew, see GKC, 130d; Joüon, 129p; I. L. Seeligmann in *VT* 14 (1964), 85, n. 4; and M. Dahood, *Ugaritic-Hebrew Philology* (BibOr 17; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1965), 16. Further on the construction in Ugaritic, see W. F. Albright in *BASOR* 71 (1938), 37, n. 21; idem, *BASOR* 82 (1941), 47, n. 27.

[16]Traditionally, this verb has been taken from *šwr*, "to journey, travel." The root is poorly attested in Hebrew, with possible occurrences in (1) 1 Sam 9:7 (*tĕšûrâ*, "things/offerings brought [by a traveller]"; so BDB, 1003b, s. v. *tĕšûrâ*, which labels this as "very dubious"; or "provisions for a journey"; so M. Dahood, *Bib* 54 [1973], 354, and *Bib* 55 [1974], 392–393); (2) Ezek 27:25 (feminine plural participle, "thy traveller"; again, BDB, 1003b, s. v. *šwr* I, "improbable"); (3) Cant 4:8b (*tšry*, taken by KB, 958a, s. v. *šwr* II, as meaning "to depart"; BDB, 1003b, s. v. *šwr* II, takes *tšry* from *šwr* II, "to look, gaze");

wtrby rqḥyk	you multiplied your perfumes.
wtšlḥy ṣryk ʿd mrḥq[18]	You sent your envoys to a distant throne (?),

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and (4) Hos 9:12b (Dahood, *Bib* 54 [1973], 354, repoints *bĕšûrî* as *bĕšûrî* and translates "when I depart"). Obviously, none of these attestations are particularly convincing, nor is there any compelling evidence for *šwr*, "to travel, journey" from the cognate languages (*contra* Dahood, *Bib* 54 [1973], 354). I thus prefer to read a root *šrr* or *šrh*, following, partially, G. R. Driver (*Festschrift Eilers*, 54; "Difficult Words in the Hebrew Prophets," *Studies in Old Testament Prophecy* [ed. H. H. Rowley; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1950], 58–59). Driver, noting that the parallel *wtrby* and G *eplēthynas* both suggest a root other than *šwr*, "to journey," proposes Hebrew *šrr* or *šrh*, cognate with Arabic *ṯarra* II or *ṯariya* II, IV, both meaning "to moisten," or, better in the context of v 9, "to anoint." This root is a perfect parallel for *wtrby rqḥyk* in the second half of the colon. Moreover, as pointed out by P. Wernberg-Møller ("Two Notes," *VT* 8 [1958], 307), 1QIsa[a] *tšry*, without *plenē* spelling, supports an interpretation of the verb as geminate or third-*hē* rather than middle weak.

[17]Commentators most frequently interpret *lmlk* as either a reference to a contemporary Asiatic king or the name of a Semitic deity, usually Milkom or Molech. But it is doubtful that there is any Semitic deity Molech; rather, *mōlek* in the Hebrew Bible is to be associated with Phoenician/Punic *mulk*, a technical term for sacrificial offerings in the cult of child sacrifice (see below, pp. 126–137). Although it is possible, according to Phoenician/Punic and biblical evidence, to substitute an animal for the child, the reference to slaughtering children in v 5 indicates that the offering is to be understood as human. Thus v 9a describes the preparation of the sacrificed child's body for immolation and/or burial. To anoint and perfume corpses is, of course, standard burial practice in the ancient Near East (2 Chr 16:14; Mark 16:1; Luke 23:56; John 19:39–40). Alternatively, it may be that the corpse is drenched in oil to make it burn better (see L. E. Stager and S. R. Wolff, *BASOR* 243 [1981], 97, and 100, n. 3).

[18]MT *ʿad mērāḥōq* suffers from a redundancy of prepositions in v 9bα, as well as the stylistically unsatisfactory repetition of *ʿd* in v 9bß. I thus prefer to read *ʿad merḥāq*, "distant throne," a description of Môt's royal dais in the underworld. This reading is appealing, for it introduces another example of the wordplay that characterizes this passage. Note also that it is grammatically possible, since *šlḥ* can, on occasion, take two direct objects. See especially 2 Kgs 22:3: *šālaḥ hammelek ʾet šāpān . . . bêt yahweh*, "the king sent Shaphan . . . to the temple."

The root *ʿd*, "throne," occurs in *CTA* 16.6.22 (parallel to *ksu*) and in *CTA* 23.12. There is no satisfactory etymology, but its meaning in Ugaritic seems

wtšpyly ʿd šʾwl	sent them down even to Sheol.
(10) *brb drkk ygʿt*	In the length of your way you wearied,
lʾ ʾmrt nwʾš	but you did not say, "There is no hope."
ḥyt ydk[19] *mṣʾt*	You found revivification for your strength,

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certain. M. Dahood (*Bib* 50 [1969], 347) has found *ʿd*, "throne," in several places in the Hebrew Bible; particularly convincing examples are Ps 89:38; Jer 22:30 (if the *plenē* spelling *ʿwd* is ignored); Zeph 3:8. L. A. Schökel (*Isaías* [Madrid: Ediciones Cristiandad, 1968], 269), notably, has added Isa 57:15 to this list. That Môt is a king who would have a throne is demonstrated by Job 18:14, where, as first noted by M. Pope (*Job* [AB 15; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965, 1973], 136), the epithet *mlk* is applied to Môt. Other suggested occurrences of this epithet for Môt are Eshmunazor (*KAI* 14.9; so M. Dahood, "Hebrew-Ugaritic Lexicography VII," *Bib* 50 [1969], 341–342; possible), and Isa 30:33 (so W. H. Irwin, *Isaiah 28–33. Translation with Philological Notes* [BibOr 30; Rome: Biblical Institute, 1977], 105–106; unlikely). See, in addition, *CTA* 4.8.12–13 and *CTA* 5.2.15–16, where Môt's city, "Decay," is described as *ksu ṯbth*, "the seat of his enthronement." *CTA* 6.6.28 also describes Môt's kingdom.

On the cosmic mountain and the underworld which lies beneath it as a distant place, see the Hebrew description of the cosmic mountain as *yarkětê ṣāpôn* in Isa 14:13 and the discussion of Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 37–38. See also *CTA* 3.4.78–79 and *CTA* 1.3.19 (cf. *CTA* 2.3.2), where Anat and Kothar-wa-Ḫasis respectively journey *lrḥq ilm*, "to the distant place of the gods," parallel to *lrḥq ilnym*, "to the distant place of the shades." That both *ilm* and *ilnym* refer to the dead is made clear in *CTA* 6.6.45–48, where *rpum*, "the ghosts," *ilnym*, *ilm*, and *mtm*, "the dead," all occur in parallelism. Also note 1 Sam 28:13, where the ghost of the dead Samuel is called an *ʾĕlōhîm*. Further evidence that *CTA* 3.4.78–79 refers to the underworld can be found in the lines that immediately follow, where the watery depths of the underworld, which lie below the cosmic mountain, seem to be described (cf. *CTA* 4.4.20–24; 6.1.32–36; 17.6.47–49).

[19]The phrase *ḥyt yd* is obscure, and it may be that any attempt at explanation is hopeless. Still, the presence of a second enigmatic use of *yād* in Isa 57:3–13 suggests that the analysis of *yād* in v 8c should be significant here. In discussing *yād*, "phallus," in v 8c (see above, n. 14), I noted *CTA* 23.33–35, *tirkm yd il*, parallel to *ark yd il*, both meaning "El's power grew great" or "El's rod grew long." In v 10, although *yād*, with the feminine possessive suffix, surely cannot mean "phallus," it could well mean "power." Thus a *double entendre* similar to the one which Cross sees in the word *yd* in *CTA* 23 is also present here in Isaiah 57.

ʿl kn lʾ ḥlyt	therefore you did not weaken.
(11) *wʾt my dʾgt wtyrʾy*	Whom did you dread and fear
ky tkzby	that you lied,
wʾwty lʾ zkrt	that you did not remember me,
lʾ śmt ʿl lbk	that you did not give me a thought?
hlʾ ʾny mḥšh wmʿlm[20]	Have I not kept silent even from of old?
wʾwty lʾ tyrʾy	But me you did not fear.
(12) *ʾny ʾgyd ṣdqtk*	As for me, I will declare your righteousness,
wʾt mʿśyk	and also your deeds.
wlʾ ywʿylwk (13) *bzʿqk*	But they will not help you when you cry out,
yṣylk qbwṣyk[21]	your gathered spirits will not save you.

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[20]G *parorō* reflects Hebrew *maʿlīm*, a Hiphil participle of *ʿlm*, "to hide, conceal." Many have accepted the G as the correct reading here, but the general unreliability of the G in Isa 57:3–13 suggests that the MT, supported by 1QIsa[a] *wmʿwlm*, has preserved the original reading. The *wāw* preceding *mʿlm* has been convincingly identified by P. D. Hanson (*Dawn*, 193, n. w) as pleonastic, calling special attention to the word to which it is attached.

[21]Although Lewis has pointed out that the hapax *qbwṣ* has been dismissed as a non-word by, most recently, J. McKenzie (*Second Isaiah*, 157), he argues that the occurrence of *qbṣ* in RS 34.126 ("The Ugaritic Funerary Text"), parallel to *rpu*, "ghosts," suggests that *qbwṣ* is the correct reading in Isa 57:13a and that implicit in the term is yet another reference to some death cult(s) in Isa 57:3–13. (*Cults*, 151–152; "Death Cult Imagery," *Hebrew Annual Review* 11 (1987), 276). 1QIsa[a] supports MT *qbwṣ*, although the word is vocalized differently (*qwbṣ*) in the Qumrân tradition.

Which verbs the nominative *qbwṣ* governs, however, is not clear. *qbwṣ* is, of course, the subject of *nṣl* in v 13a. Traditional translations see *qbwṣ* as only the subject of *nṣl* and take the subject of the preceding *yʿl* as "your righteousness and deeds," yielding, "I will tell of your righteousness and your deeds/ but they will not help you./ When you cry out, let your collection of idols deliver you." Such a translation, however, suffers literarily from a lack of parallelism, especially since we might expect *yʿl* and *nṣl* to be a parallel pair here (see Prov 10:2 and cf. 1 Sam 12:21). Alternatively, P. D. Hanson (*Dawn*, 190–191, 193, n. x), following the Vg and the Peshitta, reads, "I will declare your righteousness/ your deeds which will not help you/ when you cry out, let your idol clusters deliver you." But Hanson too fails to read *yʿl* as parallel to *nṣl*, and I thus prefer to follow the prosodic interpretation of another ancient version, 1QIsa[a]. By reading *qwbṣ* both in the last colon of v 12 and in the first colon of

wʾt klm yśʾ rwḥ	The wind will carry all of them off,
yqḥ hbl	a breath will take them away.
whḥwsh by ynḥl ʾrṣ	But whoever takes refuge in me will inherit the land,
wyyrš hr qdšy[22]	and will possess my holy mountain.

This poem, with its multiple allusions to popular Judahite religion, would seem to be an ideal candidate for our study. But before we examine its allusions in detail we must pause, for, as was the case with Ezekiel 8, some would question the inclusion of Isa 57:3–13 because of its date. Such scholars have suggested that Isa 57:3–13 is a pre-exilic composition, not original to Second (Third?) Isaiah, but instead from the seventh century, most probably from the time of Manasseh.[23] This older bit of prophecy is then secondarily inserted into the post-exilic Isaiah 56–66. If this is true, Isa 57:3–13 would antedate the sixth century and thus be unacceptable for consideration here.

A pre-exilic date for Isa 57:3–13 was first suggested by H. Ewald,[24] and this dating has been championed by many German commentators, including P. Volz,[25] O. Eissfeldt,[26] and, more recently, C.

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v 13, 1QIsa[a] insists that *qwbṣ/qbwṣ* is the subject of both *yʿl* and *nṣl*. Grammatically, it is certainly possible for *qbwṣ* in the MT to do double-duty as subject in both 12b and 13a; in addition, in this interpretation, the negative *lʾ* also does double-duty. Cf. the comments of M. Dahood, "Hebrew-Ugaritic Lexicography IX," *Bib* 52 (1971), 343–344.

[22]Often deleted as a gloss, v 13b, with its play on the root *nḥl* (v 5, 6), is surely original to the poem.

[23]An older school, following the proposal of B. Duhm (*Das Buch Jesaia*, 379–380, 384) advanced a fifth-century date, contemporary with Ezra and Nehemiah, for all of Isaiah 56–66. According to Duhm and his followers, those condemned in Isa 57:3–13 were thus fifth-century Samaritan apostates. But although we certainly owe Duhm our gratitude for his work in isolating a Second Isaiah, few now take his date for Isaiah 56–66 seriously, and the Samaritan hypothesis is one we can safely ignore.

[24]H. Ewald, *Prophets of the Old Testament* 4 (London: Williams and Norgate, 1880), 252–253, 321–322.

[25]P. Volz, *Jesaia* 2, 213.

[26]O. Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament: An Introduction* (New York: Harper and

Westermann.[27] To these scholars, the imagery, language, and tone of Isa 57:3–13 are reminiscent of pre-exilic prophecy. Specifically, the mention of a cult of child sacrifice in v 5 suggests to Ewald and his followers a date during the period of Manasseh, when child sacrifice, according to the Deuteronomistic historians, flourished. These scholars also believe the fertility rites described in Isa 57:3–13 are pre-exilic in nature; indeed, they compare the poet's image of religious apostates as prostitutes to the earlier prophecies of Hosea (Hos 1:1–3:5; 4:2–14), Jeremiah (Jer 2:20–28), and Ezekiel (Ezek 16:15–43; 23:5–49). In addition, the invective tone of Isa 57:3–13 is, according to this school, typically pre-exilic and is not appropriate in a post-exilic document of eschatological hope. Finally, these scholars believe that the leaders condemned in Isa 56:9–57:2, a composition which precedes and is probably in some way related to our poem,[28] must be the civil leaders of pre-exilic Jerusalem.

However, there is no reason to presume that the cults condemned in Isa 57:3–13 could not have existed after the seventh century. We have already demonstrated in Chapter 1 that fertility cults, such as the cult of the Queen of Heaven, thrived among Judean women in the sixth century. Our discussion in Chapter 2 concerning the veracity of Ezekiel 8 proved that despite Josiah's reforms some decades previous many and diverse "apostate" cults continued to flourish in sixth-century Jerusalem. And certainly the mention of child sacrifice in Isaiah 57 need not indicate a date during the time of Manasseh. As we will see below, the continued condemnations of child sacrifice during the late seventh and sixth centuries by Josiah (2 Kgs 23:10), by Jeremiah (Jer 7:30–32; 19:5; 32:35), and by Ezekiel (Ezek 16:21; 20:26, 31; 23:39) and the kindred Priestly School (Lev 18:21; 20:2–4) indicate that child sacrifice persisted throughout the sixth century.

Indeed, the language of Isa 57:3–13 is firmly rooted in the sixth century. For example, the verb used of child sacrifice in Isa 57:5, *šḥṭ*,

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Row, 1965), 345. Note, however, that Eissfeldt does express some reservations about the pre-exilic date.

[27]C. Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 325.

[28]See above, n. 1.

"to slaughter," although common in the Hebrew Bible, refers to child sacrifice only in three other places; two of these occurrences are in the sixth-century book of Ezekiel (Ezek 16:21; 23:39).[29] Similarly, the phrase found in Isa 57:5, "under every green tree" (*kol ʿēṣ raʿănān*), a stereotypical phrase used in condemning fertility cults, belongs almost exclusively to the language of Jeremiah (Jer 2:20; 3:6, 13), Ezekiel (Ezek 6:13), and the Deuteronomistic historians (1 Kgs 14:23; 2 Kgs 16:4; 17:10), that is, to the language of the late seventh and sixth centuries.[30]

We can go further. The fact that the focus of Isa 57:3–13 is cultic rather than political suggests to K. Elliger, who has provided one of the most thorough analyses of the dating of the poem, that a post-exilic date, that is, a date from a period of theocratic, rather than monarchical rule, is to be preferred.[31] Indeed, the condemnation of the leaders in Isa 56:9–57:2 is best paralleled by the indictment of the ruling classes in the related post-exilic work of Deutero-Zechariah (Zech 10:2–5; 11:4–17).

Moreover, P. D. Hanson[32] has observed that at least some of the activities described in Isa 57:3–13 may take place on the temple mount. Hanson sees important evidence in vv 7–8. There, standing behind the reference to the bed, *miškāb*, that the prostitute sets up on a high and lofty mountain (*har gābōah wĕniśśāʾ*), is an allusion to a shrine, *miškān*.[33] The description of offering sacrifice at the "bed" in the next colon confirms that the *miškāb*/*miškān* pun is intended, as does the reference to a "door and doorpost" in the beginning of v 8. "Shrines"

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[29]The other occurrence of *šḥṭ* in conjunction with child sacrifice is in Gen 22:10.

[30]The only other occurrences of the phrase are in Deut 12:2 and in 2 Chr 28:4; the latter is clearly dependent on 2 Kgs 16:4.

[31]K. Elliger, *Die Einheit des Tritojesaia* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1928), 78–85.

[32]Hanson, *Dawn*, 199–200.

[33]On this pun, see also W. H. Brownlee, *The Meaning of the Qumrân Scrolls for the Bible* (New York: Oxford University, 1964), 190, and H. L. Ginsberg, "Some Emendations in Isaiah," *JBL* 69 (1950), 59–60.

have "doors and doorposts"; "beds" do not. Furthermore, the words *har gābōah wĕniśśā'* indicate to us exactly where the shrine is being erected: on Mount Zion. Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, at least, the singular *har gābōah* always refers to the temple mount (Isa 40:9; Ezek 17:22; 40:2).[34] The most interesting example is Isa 40:9, where the parallel to *har gābōah* is Zion:

> Get you up to a high mountain,
> O herald of good tidings, to Zion.

Similarly, *niśśā'* is used to modify *har* two times other than Isa 57:7, in Mic 4:1 and Isa 2:2. These identical oracles describe Zion. The reference to God's holy mountain in v 13 further suggests that the locus of at least part of Isa 57:3–13 is Mount Zion.[35]

This is an important point for dating the poem, since a reference to condemned cult activities on Zion indicates that Isa 57:3–13 must come from a time when the temple has not been rebuilt. This datum, in addition to those discussed above, prompts me to propose a date in the early post-exilic period, somewhere between 535–520.[36]

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[34]Isa 30:25 and Jer 3:6, *ʿal kol har gābōah*, are excepted here, since *kol har gābōah*, although technically singular, has a plural referent.

[35]In addition to the arguments advanced here on the identification of the *har* of Isa 57:7 with the temple mount, the article of W. L. Holladay ("'On Every High Hill and Under Every Green Tree,'" *VT* 11 [1961], 170–176) is useful for determining the difference between the typical language of the *bāmôt* and the specialized language of the temple mount.

[36]An identical or similar date is championed by Elliger, *Die Einheit des Tritojesaia*, 78–85; Hanson, *Dawn*, 194–195; W. Kessler, *Gott geht es um das Ganze*, 29; J. McKenzie, *Second Isaiah*, 158; J. Muilenburg, "The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66: Introduction and Exegesis," *IB* 5 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1956), 660; R. N. Whybray, *Isaiah 40–66* (New Century Bible; London: Oliphants, 1975), 199; G. E. Wright, *The Book of Isaiah* (The Layman's Bible Commentary 11; Richmond, VA: John Knox, 1964), 130–140.

We might note here that the stereotypical Deuteronomistic phrase, "under every green tree," is not, in Isa 57:5, accompanied by its usual parallel, some form of "on every high hill." This breakdown in the typical Deuteronomistic usage suggests that Isa 57:5 must post-date those who know and use the parallel in its classical form, the Deuteronomistic historians, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. On

Yet still we must question: even though the poem is from the post-exilic period, is it to be taken literally? It is really possible that people in the last third of the sixth century were sacrificing their children, engaging in fertility rituals, and participating in cults of the dead? And, indeed, is it possible that they were doing this on the temple mount? Or, rather, is the poem political propaganda, the product, for example, of a polarized religious community? If the latter is true, the poem is dismissed as hyperbole. It does not belong in a study seeking to describe sixth-century religious practices.

The major proponent of the theory of polemical hyperbole is Hanson, who believes that the sixth-century Isaiah condemns in Isa 56:9–57:13 Jerusalem's recently returned theocratic leadership. Concerning the activities listed in 57:3–13, Hanson writes:[37]

> Even as the prophetic group constantly identifies its ancestry with those faithful to Yahweh in the past, they identify their foes [the priests] with those in Israel's past history who forsook Yahweh and turned to foreign gods. This means that the description of their activity in verses 5–10 is to be taken no more literally than is the designation 'sons of a witch, offspring of the adulterer and the whore.' As in 59:5f. ('they hatch adder's eggs, they weave the spider's web') and 65:11 ('who set a table for Gad, who fill cups of mixed drink for Meni'), various types of symbols are being used to support their accusation that those being attacked are unclean, and their cult is defiled.

Moreover, according to Hanson, not only are the accusations of religious apostasy in Isa 57:3–13 exaggerated propaganda, they are not even accurate descriptions of the repertoire of popular cult practices available in Judea after the exile. Rather Hanson feels that our poet is drawing on earlier prophetic material; he describes the poem as "a list of stereotyped phrases describing Israel's apostasy and drawn from the

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the other hand, Isa 57:5 must be close enough in date to the Deuteronomistic historians, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel to know, in some form, the cliché. Again, a late sixth-century date is indicated. See further Holladay, "'On Every High Hill,'" *VT* 11 (1961), especially p. 176.

[37]Hanson, *Dawn*, 198.

language of earlier prophecy."[38]

I agree with Hanson that it is difficult to conceive of the priests who returned from Babylon after the exile participating in what they considered apostate cults. But unlike him, I am not convinced that Isa 57:3–13 is addressed to the community leaders of Jerusalem, as is Isa 56:9–57:2. The grammar of 57:3–13 is particularly significant here. Isa 56:9–57:2, the condemnation of the leadership followed by a salvation oracle for the righteous, is delivered impersonally, in third-person masculine plural forms. But in Isa 57:3 the grammar shifts. The disjunctive *wĕ'attem*, "but you," signals a change in address to the second-person masculine plural; I believe that the group addressed changes as well. The grammar of vv 6–13 tells us who that group is, for in v 6 the address changes again, this time to second-person feminine singular; such forms in Isaiah 40–66 are used to address Jerusalem personified (e. g., Isa 40:9; 44:26–28; 60:1–22; 62:2–12). Thus vv 3–5 must be directed to the citizens of Jerusalem, followed by vv 6–13, directed to Jerusalem herself.[39]

In evaluating the accuracy of this condemnation of the Jerusalem community, we must consider the prophet's purpose. The prophet's aim is not to show himself as a fanatical exaggerator, nor is it to demonstrate his wit. Rather, the prophet seeks to deliver an indictment.

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[38]Hanson, *Dawn*, 197–198.

[39]This is not to say that vv 6–13 are a separate composition from vv 3–5 (*contra* Volz, *Jesaia* 2, 207–216; Eissfeldt, *Introduction*, 345; Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 316–325). Rather, the switch in address between people of Jerusalem (second-person masculine plural) and Jerusalem herself (second-person feminine singular) is one that comes easily to the poet(s) of Isaiah 56-66. In Isaiah 60-62, the poet begins by exhorting Jerusalem "Arise, shine," *qûmî 'ôrî* (Isa 60:1), in second-person feminine singular forms, but as this poem of restoration continues, he promises to the people of Jerusalem, in second-person masculine plural forms, "aliens shall stand and feed your flocks (*ṣō'nĕkem*), foreigners shall be your plowmen and vinedressers (*'ikkārêkem wĕkōrĕmêkem*)" (Isa 61:5). The promise addressed to the people then gives way again to a promise directed to Jerusalem herself, who is assured, "The nations will see your righteousness (*ṣidqēk*)" (Isa 62:2). That is, in both Isaiah 60-62 and in the shorter composition of Isa 57:3-13, there is an alternation in address between the people of Jerusalem and Jerusalem herself.

For that indictment to carry weight, it must be believable to its hearers. If the behavior of the community is to change, then the community must be convinced that the abuses the prophet is describing are real and that they are ongoing and dangerous. A polemic that is not plausible is simply not a good polemic.

Isa 57:3–13 thus describes reliably popular cult practices of the late sixth century. We now turn to examine those practices in detail.

The Slaughter of Children

The biblical authors are resolute in their condemnation of the cult of child sacrifice. Both the laws of the Deuteronomic school and the Holiness Code of the Priestly tradition forbid the rite. Lev 18:21 commands (cf. Lev 20:2–5):

> You shall not give any of your progeny to consign [them to the fire] as a sacrificial offering; thus you will not profane the name of your God.

Similarly, Deut 18:10–12 reads (see also Deut 12:31):

> There shall not be found among you anyone who consigns his son or his daughter to the fire . . . for anyone who does these things is an abomination to Yahweh.

The narrative material in the Deuteronomistic history seconds the law code set forth in Deuteronomy in regarding child sacrifice as an "abomination to Yahweh." According to the Deuteronomists, child sacrifice was one of the many abhorrent rites practiced during the reign of Ahaz of Judah (734–715 B.C.E.), who, the second book of Kings claims, even burned his own son as an offering (2 Kgs 16:3). In the North, Ahaz's contemporary, Hoshea (732–723 B.C.E.), also allowed the cult to flourish among his subjects (2 Kgs 17:16–17):

> And they rejected all the commandments of Yahweh their God . . . and they consigned their sons and daughters to the fire.

Further, according to the Deuteronomistic history, the cult was practiced again during the reign of Manasseh (687–642 B.C.E.), who,

like Ahaz, sacrificed his own son (2 Kgs 21:6). Finally, the Deuteronomists inform us, Josiah defiled the site of child sacrifice, the Tophet, in the valley of Ben-Hinnom, and so abolished the rite as a part of his great reform (2 Kgs 23:10).

But Josiah's reform does not seem to have put an end to the cult,[40] and among the great sixth-century prophets, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Second Isaiah continue to castigate those who practice child sacrifice. Jeremiah, writing after the Josianic reform,[41] condemns the people for (re)building the Tophet (Jer 7:30–32; see also Jer 19:5 and 32:35):

> "For the people of Judah have done evil in my sight," says Yahweh . . . "they have built the *bāmâ* sanctuary[42] of the Tophet, which is in the valley of Ben-Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in fire. This I never commanded nor had in mind."

Similarly, Ezekiel, writing of the sins of Israel and Judah which brought about their respective falls, cites child sacrifice as one such apostasy (Ezek 16:21; 20:31; 23:39). Finally, of course, is the unambiguous reference to and condemnation of child sacrifice after the exile in Isa 57:5. Isa 57:9a, I believe, also contains a reference to the cult of child sacrifice.[43]

But despite these emphatic legal, narrative, and prophetic condemnations of the cult of child sacrifice, there is evidence that such a cult is not to be dismissed as wholly alien to Yahwism. Certainly, as can be seen from the story of the sacrifice of Isaac in Genesis 22, the god of the fathers felt no compunction about requesting from Abraham the sacrifice of his first-born son, Isaac; Abraham, at least in the story as it has come down to us, expresses no doubt that his god had the right to make such a demand. The deity, in short, could make a claim upon

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[40]See above, pp. 111–114, also note the discussion in Chapter 2, pp. 46–51.

[41]On this date for Jeremiah's Temple Sermon, see p. 6, n. 3 (Chapter 1), and the references there.

[42]Reading *bāmâ* with the G, instead of MT *bāmôt*. See J. Bright, *Jeremiah* (AB 21; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965), 57, but cf. W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah* 1 (Hermeneia; Philadephia: Fortress, 1986), 264.

[43]See above, pp. 107–108, nn. 16–17.

the child. Of course, the Genesis tradition, as it is received, rejects child sacrifice as an inappropriate rite in the worship of the patriarchal god. The deity provides a substitute sacrifice of a ram, and Isaac is spared.

The biblical writers unanimously identify the god of the fathers with Yahweh, and the implication of this is that Yahweh, like the patriarchal god, can make a claim upon Israelite children. Indeed, this is made explicit in legal texts.[44] The archaic covenant code demands, "the first-born of your sons you shall give to me" (Exod 22:28); similarly, in an archaic but fragmentary version of the cultic decalogue, preserved by the Yahwistic writer, the deity claims, "all that opens the womb is mine" (Exod 34:19). Later in date, but equally emphatic, is Exod 13:1–2 (see also Lev 27:26; Num 3:13; 8:17–18; 18:15):

> Yahweh said to Moses, "Consecrate to me all the first-born; whatever is the first to open the womb among the people of Israel, both of man and beast, is mine."

In biblical tradition, of course, Yahweh does not insist on his right to the first-born, but, as in Genesis 22, the deity provides for a mechanism of substitution. The child is redeemed by sacrificing an animal instead; such redemption is commanded in Exod 13:13,15; Exod 34:20; and Num 18:15. What is important for our purposes, however, is the underlying assumption that Yahweh could, if he were to so choose, demand the sacrifice of a child. Child sacrifice, it seems, is possible within some circles of Yahwism.[45]

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[44]P. Mosca (*Child Sacrifice in Canaanite and Isarelite Religion: A Study in mulk and mlk* [unpublished Ph.D. dissertation; Harvard University; Cambridge, MA; 1975], 235–238) prefers to remove the material on the so-called "Law of the First-Born" from the scope of the study of child sacrifice. This division is, however, somewhat arbitrary, and linguistic data (the use of vocabulary like *nātan* and *he'ĕbîr* in both the child sacrifice and the first-born texts) makes Mosca's proposal seem unlikely. See G. C. Heider, *The Cult of Molek. A Reassessment* (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series 43; Sheffield, England: JSOT, 1986), 252–258; S. Olyan and M. Smith, "Review of *The Cult of Molek. A Reassessment*, by George C. Heider," *RB* 94 (1987), 274.

[45]Such a thesis could perhaps clarify the enigmatic Ezek 20:26, where

If we consider the comparative data from the ancient Near East, we can further elucidate this thesis. In the ancient Near East child sacrifice was widely practiced. The Israelites themselves knew that child sacrifice occurred in Transjordan, for the Hebrew Bible reports that Meša, king of Moab, sacrificed his son in an effort to avoid defeat in battle (2 Kgs 3:27). H. Tur-Sinai has suggested that a tradition of Moabite child sacrifice is also reflected in Amos 2:1, where he repoints *melek ʾĕdōm* as *mōlek ʾādām*[46] and translates:[47]

> For three offenses of Moab, yea, for four, I will not turn back.
> Because he burns the bones of a human sacrificial offering to lime.

Additional evidence from Transjordan may come from ʿAmmān, where J. B. Hennessy's initial archaeological reports from the excavations at the ʿAmmān airport described finding a Late Bronze Age precinct of child sacrifice, a tophet, at the site.[48] This evidence has been challenged by L. G. Herr, but Hennessy's data seem solid.[49]

Other Late Bronze Age evidence for child sacrifice was advanced by Ph. Derchain in 1970 and by A. J. Spalinger in 1978.[50] Derchain

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Yahweh says, "and I defiled them by their gifts in making them consign [to the fire] all the first-born," which has never been satisfactorily explained in the literature.

[46]On *mōlek* as a technical term of child sacrifice meaning sacrificial offering, see above, n. 17, and more extensively below, pp. 126–137.

[47]H. Tur-Sinai, *Ha-lashon we-ha-sefer* 1 (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1948), 64; for a further emendation, see W. F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan. A Historical Analysis of Two Contrasting Faiths* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1968), 240 and n. 95.

[48]J. B. Hennessy, "Excavation of a Late Bronze Age Temple at Amman," *PEQ* 98 (1966), 155–162; idem, "A Temple of Human Sacrifice at Amman," *The Gazette* (November, 1970), 307–309.

[49]L. G. Herr, "The Amman Airport Excavations, 1976," ADAJ 21 (1976), 110; idem, "The Amman Airport Structure and the Geopolitics of Ancient Transjordan," *BA* 46 (1983), 223–229.

[50]Ph. Derchain, "Les plus anciens témoignages de sacrifices d'enfants chez les sémites occidentaux," *VT* 20 (1970), 351–355; A. J. Spalinger, "A Canaanite Ritual Found in Egyptian Reliefs," *The Society for the Study of Egyptian*

suggested that a relief of Merneptah[51] representing that pharaoh's siege of Ashkelon in the late thirteenth century depicts a scene of child sacrifice; Spalinger has compared other Egyptian reliefs from the New Kingdom. On the Merneptah relief Canaanites atop the city wall of Ashkelon lift their hands in entreaty. One Canaanite holds a brazier aloft with one hand, the other hand is raised in benediction. From two towers of the wall, men dangle the bodies of children over the edge of the fortifications. Derchain and Spalinger, noting the religious motifs in the scene, suggest that the children are dead, sacrificed to appease the gods and ward off the Egyptian attack.[52] Alternatively, it may be that the children are simply being moved from one level of the city walls to another.[53]

From elsewhere on the Levantine mainland we can note the third- or second-century Phoenician *mulk* stele from Nebi-Yunis, which begins, "the stele of *mulk*-sacrifice that the men of ʿAbdoʾ son of ʿAbd-ʾ have vowed . . . to their lord ʾEšmun."[54] The Bible reports further child sacrifice among the Aramaean Sepharvaim, who were settled by the

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Antiquities Journal 8/2 (1978), 47–60.

[51]Derchain, following Egyptological convention, dates the relief to the time of Ramesses II; for the revised date, which Spalinger accepts, see the abstract of F. Yurco's paper, "Merneptah's Palestinian Campaign," *The Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities Journal* 8/3 (1978), 70; L. E. Stager, "Merneptah, Israel and Sea Peoples: New Light on an Old Relief," *Eretz Israel* 18 (Nahman Avigad volume; 1985), 56*–64*.

[52]See also J. K. Hoffmeir, "Letter to the Editor," *BARev* 12/2 (March/April, 1987), 60–61.

[53]Suggested to me by L. E. Stager (private communication).

[54]The *editio princeps* of the inscription was by M.- J. Lagrange, "Une inscription phéniciene," *RB* 1 (1892), 275–281. M. Lidzbarski included the stele in his *Handbuch der nordsemitischen Epigraphik* (Weimar: Emil Ferber, 1898), 131–132, and in his *Ephemeris für semitische Epigraphik* 1 (Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1902), 285–287, although he believed the inscription to be a forgery. However, the authenticity of the inscription has been proven by B. Delavault and A. Lemaire, "Une stèle 'molk' de Palestine dediée à Eshmoun? RES 367 reconsidéré," *RB* 83 (1976), 569–583. For the translation given here, I am dependent on the work of A. Gianto, "Some Notes on the Mulk Inscription from Nebi Yunis (*RES* 367)," *Bib* 68 (1987), 397–401.

Assyrians in Samaria, in the seventh century (2 Kgs 17:31).[55]

At Ugarit evidence for child sacrifice is surprisingly sparse. Liturgical text *PRU* 5, 4.2 (RS 19.15) does mention a *dbḥ mlk*, which could mean "*mulk* sacrifice," but the fragmentary nature of the text and the enigmatic context make any certain interpretation impossible.[56] Equally vague is *CTA* 35.50, *[d]bḥ mlk lprgl*, cited by R. Dussaud as evidence of a *mulk* sacrifice at Ugarit.[57] A prayer from Ugarit[58] has been taken by some, most emphatically by B. Margalit, as a vow to sacrifice a child (*bkr*, paralleled by *ḥtk*) if Baal will drive enemy forces away from the gates of the city.[59] But such a reading involves an emendation of a crucial word, *ḥtp*, which Margalit takes as a scribal error for *ḥtk*, "son, scion." The *b* of *bkr*, "first-born," is also in some doubt. Others, for example, read *dkr*, "male animal." And even if the correct reading is *bkr*, the "first-born" referred to could just as easily be animal as human. Again, we must conclude that no certain

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[55]On the identification of the Sepharvaim, see W. F. Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1942), 220, n. 116.

[56]For a discussion of the text, as well as bibliographical information, see Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, 241, and nn. 98–99.

[57]R. Dussaud, "Review of Otto Eissfeldt, *Molk als Opferbegriff im Punischen und Hebräischen und das Ende des Gottes Moloch*," *AfO* 11 (1936), 167–168.

[58]A. Herdner, "Nouveaux textes alphabetiques de Ras Shamra, xxiv campagne," *Ugaritica* 7 (Paris: Librairie orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1978), 35–38; also see idem, "Une prière à Baal des ugaritains en danger," *CRAIBL* (1972), 693–697, and the appended comments of C. F. A. Schaeffer, 697–699, and A. Dupont-Sommer, 699–703.

[59]B. Margalit, "A Ugaritic Prayer for a City under Siege," *Proceedings of the Seventh World Congress of Jewish Studies: Studies in the Bible and the Ancient Near East, 1977* (Jerusalem: The Perry Foundation for Biblical Research; World Union of Jewish Studies, 1981), 63–83; idem, "Why King Mesha of Moab Sacrificed his Oldest Son," *BARev* 12/6 (November/December, 1986), 62–63. Herdner, *Ugaritica* 7, 36, 37–38, and *CRAIBL* (1972), 694, 697, proposes, with more caution, a similar interpretation; she is followed by Dupont-Sommer, *CRAIBL* (1972), 700–703.

interpretation is possible.[60]

The bulk of our evidence for the cult of child sacrifice in the ancient Near East comes from the western Mediterranean world, in particular from Phoenician and Punic colonies in Sicily, Sardinia, and North Africa, especially Carthage.[61] Archaeologists have discovered large cemeteries, called tophets after the biblical usage, containing the burial urns of sacrificial victims at all these sites. The cemetery at Carthage, the so-called precinct of Tannit, is by far the largest, and L. E. Stager, the most recent excavator of the Carthage tophet, estimates that some 20,000 burial urns were interred there between 400–200 B.C.E.[62] The total number buried is even larger, for Stager estimates that the tophet was active for a period of almost six hundred years.[63]

The burial urns of the Phoenician and Punic tophets contain either the bones of small animals, lambs or kids, or the bones of human children. That the sacrifice of a lamb or kid was offered as a substitute for the life

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[60]See the cautions of Schaeffer, *CRAIBL* (1972), 698–699; of P. Xella, "Addendum" to "Sacrifici umani ad Ugarit? Il problema di NPŠ," *Religioni e Civiltà* 2 (1976), 384; and, especially, of J. M. Sasson, "Letter to the Editor," *BARev* 12/2 (March/April, 1987), 12, 60.

[61]The cult, we now know, is known as far west as Spain. See, provisionally, M. Almagro-Gorbea, "Les reliefs orientalisants de Pozo Moro (Albacete, Espagne)," *Mythe et personnification, travaux et mémoires* (ed. J. Duchemin; Centre de recherches mythologiques de l'Université de Paris 10; Paris: Société d'edition "Les belles lettres," 1980), 123–136, plus 8 plates; C. A. Kennedy, "The Mythological Reliefs from Pozo Moro, Spain," *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers*, 1981 (ed. K. H. Richards; Missoula, MT: Scholars, 1981), 209–216.

[62]L. E. Stager, "The Rite of Child Sacrifice at Carthage," *New Light on Ancient Carthage* (ed. J. G. Pedley; Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 1980), 3; idem, "Carthage: A View from the Tophet," *Phönizier im Westen* (ed. H. G. Niemeyer; Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1982), 158; L. E. Stager and S. R. Wolff, "Child Sacrifice at Carthage—Religious Rite or Population Control?," *BARev* 10/1 (January/February, 1984), 32.

[63]Stager, "The Rite of Child Sacrifice," *New Light on Ancient Carthage*, 2 and 10, n. 10. See also idem, "Carthage," *Phönizier im Westen*, 157 and n. 12, and Stager and Wolff, "Child Sacrifice," *BARev* 10/1 (January/February, 1984), 32.

of a child is made evident by the recurring dedicatory formula:[64]

Anima pro anima	Breath for breath,
sanguine pro sanguine	blood for blood,
vita pro vita . . .	life for life . . .
agnus pro vikario	a lamb for a substitute.

One is immediately reminded of the biblical data, where Yahweh commands that an animal sacrifice be substituted for the sacrifice of a child.

The god to whom children were sacrificed in the Phoenician and Punic world is identified in Semitic sources as Baʿl Ḥamōn and in classical sources as Kronos (Greek) or Saturnus (Latin). Inscriptional evidence on votive stelae from the Phoenician and Punic tophets provides us with the Semitic name of the deity; inscriptions, as well as classical authors, make clear that Semitic Baʿl Ḥamōn is to be identified with Kronos/Saturnus.[65] For example, a later paraphrase of the Greek Kleitarchos reports him as writing in the third century B.C.E.:[66]

> Out of reverence for Kronos, the Phoenicians, and especially the Carthaginians, whenever they seek to obtain some great favor, vow one of their children, burning it as a sacrifice to the deity, if they are especially eager to gain success.

Similarly, Tertullian writes that, "in Africa infants used to be sacrificed to Saturn, and quite openly, down to the proconsulate of Tiberius."[67] Diodorus Siculus makes it clear that this cult of child sacrifice was in

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[64]See J. and P. Alquier, "Stèles votives à Saturne découvertes près de N'gaous (Algerie)," *CRAIBL* (1931), 21–26, Ngaous III, 2–4, 8, and compare Ngaous I, 8, Ngaous II, 3–4, and Ngaous IV, 2–3.

[65]For a full catalogue of the classical material, see Mosca, *Child Sacrifice*, 2–23.

[66]Kleitarchos, *Scholia* to Plato's *Republic* 337A; the translation is that of Mosca, *Child Sacrifice*, 22.

[67]Tertullian, *Apologeticus* 9.2; trans. T. R. Glover, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1977), 47.

fact limited to the worship of Kronos, that is, of Semitic Baʿl Ḥamōn.[68]

The identity of Semitic Baʿl Ḥamōn, Greek Kronos, and Latin Saturnus is in no doubt. Evidence from Zinjirli, as well as the classical data, in particular the *Phoenician History* of Philo Byblius, suggests that Baʿl Ḥamōn, Kronos, and Saturnus are all to be identified with Canaanite El. In the Kilamuwa inscription from Zinjirli (*KAI* 24.16) the name Baʿl Ḥamōn occurs second in a list of three gods; in the later Zinjirli inscriptions of Hadad and Panamū (*KAI* 214.2, 11, 18, and *KAI* 215.22) the same triad of deities occurs, but with the divine name El second, in place of what must be El's epithet, Baʿl Ḥamōn.[69] Among the classical sources, Philo is the most explicit in his identification of Kronos/Saturnus with El. He recounts that the first of the four children of Ouranos and his wife Ge was *Ēlon ton kai Kronon*, "Elos, who is also Kronos" (*PE* 1.10.16);[70] later he again remarks, *Kronos . . . hon hoi phoinikes Ēl prosagoreuousin*, "Kronos, whom the Phoenicians call El" (*PE* 1.10.44).[71] Moreover, as most thoroughly discussed by F. M. Cross,[72] modern archaeological and linguistic data clearly identify Baʿl Ḥamōn, Kronos, and Saturnus with El.[73]

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[68]Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* 20.14.4–7; see further Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 26, and Mosca, *Child Sacrifice*, 5.

[69]As was first pointed out by B. Landsberger, *Sam'al* (Ankara: Druckerei der Türkischen Historischen Gesellschaft, 1948), 47, n. 117.

[70]*PE* 1.10.16. The text and translation is that of H. W. Attridge and R. A. Oden, Jr., *Philo of Byblos. The Phoenician History. Introduction, Critical Text, Translation, Notes* (CBQMS 9; Washington, D. C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1981), 48–49.

[71]Text and trans. Attridge and Oden, *Philo of Byblos*, 62–63. See also *PE* 1.10.20 and *PE* 1.10.29 (although there is a textual problem in *PE* 1.10.20, on which see A. Baumgarten, *The Phoenician History of Philo of Byblos: a Commentary* [Leiden: Brill, 1981], 198–199).

[72]Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 24–28, 35–36.

[73]Cross has also sought to prove that the consort of Baʿl Ḥamōn, *tnt*, whose name also appears on the votive inscriptions of child sacrifice, especially at Carthage, is to be identified with El's Canaanite consort, Asherah (Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 28–35). Although the identification here is not certain, in part because of the high degree of fluidity among the three great Canaanite

It has been argued by many, dating back to J. Wellhausen,[74] that Yahweh originated as an El figure. F. M. Cross and his students have, in particular, listed numerous parallels between the two. If, then, El has as a part of his cult child sacrifice, then child sacrifice should too be a possibility in the cult of Yahweh, as was theorized above. Although vigorously condemned in the canonical traditions, child sacrifice does seem to be a legitimate religious rite for some worshipers of Yahweh.[75] In Isa 57:5 and 57:9a, I sugggest, we have a tradition reflecting the place of this rite in post-exilic Israelite religion.

Two problems, however, must be considered before such a thesis can be advanced. The first concerns the etymology and meaning of Hebrew *mōlek*, a term associated with the practice of child sacrifice elsewhere

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goddesses in the first millennium, Cross may be correct. We would expect El to have Asherah as his consort. Cross also argues that the name *tnt*, which he vocalizes *tannit*, means serpent, which describes well the goddess Asherah, who is called the "Lady of the Serpent" (*dt btn*) in the Proto-Sinaitic texts and the "Lady who treads on the Sea(-dragon)" (*rbt atrt ym*) in Ugaritic lore. Certain first millennium evidence, however, argues against the second millennium Sinaitic and Ugaritic materials by suggesting that *tnt* may be Astarte. See the reading *ltnt ʿštrt*, "to *tnt*-Astarte," in the Sarepta inscription (for discussion, J. Day, "Asherah in the Hebrew Bible and Northwest Semitic Literature," *JBL* 105 [1986], 396–397, 404). Or *tnt* may be a conflation of Asherah and Astarte. See R. A. Oden, *Studies in Lucian's De Syria Dea* (HSM 15; Missoula, MT: Scholars, 1977), 98. Cf. the identity of the goddess of Sidon, who is identified as Elat (= Asherah) in Ugaritic texts (*CTA* 14.4.198–199, 201–202) and as Astarte in the Hebrew Bible (1 Kgs 11:5, 23; 2 Kgs 23:13). (But see J. W. Betlyon, "The Cult of ʾAšerah/ʾĒlat at Sidon," *JNES* 44 [1985], 53–56.) Also note the way in which Asherah and Astarte interchange as consorts of Baal in the Deuteronomistic history.

[74]J. Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black, 1885), 433, n. 1.

[75]In fact Lev 20:3, "he has given one of his offspring as a sacrificial offering and so defiled my sanctuary," may suggest that such sacrifice could take place at a Yahwistic shrine, perhaps on the temple mount. One is again reminded of Hanson's suggestion that the locus of at least some of Isa 57:3–13 is the temple mount. On this interpretation of Lev 20:3, see J. McKay, *Religion in Judah under the Assyrians, 732–609 BC* (SBT [Second Series] 26; Naperville, IL: A. R. Allenson, 1973), 106, n. 104.

in the Bible (Lev 18:21; 20:2, 3, 4, 5; Jer 32:35; 2 Kgs 23:10)[76] and, I have suggested, in Isa 57:9a. If *mōlek*, as many have argued, is the name of some other Semitic deity, then our thesis that child sacrifice is for some a part of the cult of Yahweh is called into question. Second, we must ask which children were to be sacrificed, the first-born child, as seems to be reflected in the biblical material, or any progeny, as the archaeological data argue. I will draw heavily on Phoenician and Punic archaeological evidence to determine the etymology and meaning of Hebrew *mōlek*. But the Phoenician/Punic parallels with the Hebrew Bible are called into question if the biblical sacrifice of the first-born and the Phoenician/Punic sacrifice of any child cannot be reconciled.

Biblical scholarship of the pre-critical era agreed, following the medieval rabbis, that Molech was a foreign deity to whom idolatrous worshipers in Israel and Judah offered the sacrifice (either actual or symbolic) of their children.[77] These pre-critical scholars generally related the name of this god Molech to the Semitic root *mlk*, "king." Some modern scholars still hold this view. These moderns debate, however, concerning the identification of the "king," since a number of deities can be called "king" in the Semitic world.

J. Gray, writing in 1949[78] and again in 1962,[79] suggested that Hebrew *mōlek* was to be identified with Moabite Chemosh and Ammonite Milkom, both of whom he equated with the deity of the morning star, ʿAthtar. But Gray's identifications are suspect. First, while Moabite Chemosh is correctly identified with ʿAthtar (*KAI* 181 [Meša], line 17), Ammonite Milkom is better analyzed as an epithet of Canaanite El. Indeed, Gray bases his identification of Moabite Chemosh with

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[76]In Isa 30:33 *melek* should probably be repointed to *mōlek* (cf. Amos 2:1, above, p. 120); conversely, *mōlek* in 1 Kgs 11:7 should read *milkom*. Finally, although 2 Sam 12:31 is textually impossible, one might ask whether the obscure *heʿĕbîr ʾôtām bammalkēn* does not have a reference to *mōlek* in its background.

[77]See the very complete survey of Heider, *Cult of Molek*, 2–18.

[78]J. Gray, "The Desert God ʿAṯtr in the Literature and Religion of Canaan," *JNES* 8 (1949), 72–83.

[79]J. Gray, "Molech," *IDB* 3 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), 422a–423a.

Ammonite Milkom on a single, rather precarious piece of biblical evidence, Judg 11:24, where Jephthah identifies the national god of Ammon as Chemosh. But, as scholars have long realized, this identification is due to ancient textual confusion and cannot be relied upon. Moreover, there is no good evidence for assigning ʿAthtar the epithet *mlk*. In Ugaritic lore ʿAthtar makes a brief but quite unsuccessful stab at kingship (*CTA* 6.1.54–65); elsewhere in the Semitic world traditions about ʿAthtar are vague. And, although Gray may be correct in his statement that "the sacrifice of the son of Mesha of Moab (2 Kgs 3:27) . . . would naturally be made to Chemosh,"[80] the deity to whom Meša sacrifices is in fact unspecified in the biblical text, and we cannot assume that child sacrifice belongs to the cult of ʿAthtar-Chemosh. The evidence of St. Nilus from the Byzantine period for an ʿAthtar cult of child sacrifice, further adduced by Gray, is too late in date to be conclusive.[81]

A second major proposal as to the identity of a Semitic god Molech has been made by M. Weinfeld.[82] Weinfeld proposed identifying Molech with Baal-Haddu, based, in particular, on Assyrian evidence as analyzed by K. Deller.[83] Weinfeld thus believes that the "Molech cult" of Baal-Haddu was not introduced into Israel until the Assyrian period, during the time of Ahaz.

There is, of course, a great deal of biblical material on child sacrifice which antedates the Assyrian period. Genesis 22; Exod 22:28; and Exod 34:19–20 are certainly older, and other materials, for example,

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[80]Gray, "Molech," *IDB* 3, 422b.

[81]See R. de Vaux, *Studies in Old Testament Sacrifice* (Cardiff: University of Wales, 1964), 53, and J. Henninger, "Ist der sogenannte Nilus-Bericht eine brauchbare religionsgeschichtliche Quelle?" *Anthropos* 50 (1955), 81–148.

[82]M. Weinfeld, "The Worship of Molech and of the Queen of Heaven and its Background," *UF* 4 (1972), 133–154.

[83]K. Deller, "Review of R[oland] de Vaux, *Les Sacrifices de l'Ancien Testament* (Les Cahiers de la Revue Biblique, 1)," *Or* 34 (1965), 382–386. Against Deller's analysis, see de Vaux, *Old Testament Sacrifice*, 59 and n. 40, and, in relation to Weinfeld's use of Deller, M. Smith, "A Note on Burning Babies," *JAOS* 95 (1975), 479.

Judges 11 and Exod 13:1–2, 11–16, may well be. Weinfeld deals with this problem by suggesting that biblical traditions reflect two separate and distinct cults: (1) a dedicatory fire cult of a god Molech (= Baal-Haddu) that did not include child sacrifice (Lev 18:21; 20:1–5; Deut 18:10; 2 Kgs 16:3; 21:6; 23:10); and (2) a common Canaanite cult of child sacrifice (Deut 12:31; 2 Kgs 17:31). The latter of these two is indigenous to Canaan and to it belong the materials which antedate the Assyrian period; the former was introduced by the Assyrians, as mediated through Aramaean influence.[84]

But there are several problems with Weinfeld's analysis. First, Weinfeld's evidence for his claim that the cult of Molech was non-sacrificial is primarily late, that is rabbinic. What is surely more reliable evidence can be found in the sixth-century prophets. Jeremiah and Ezekiel both identify a Molech cult with child sacrifice;[85] indeed, terms such as "transfer/pass through fire" (*heʿĕbîr*), which Weinfeld associates with the Molech cult, and "burn" (*śārap*), which is assigned to the cult of child sacrifice, are freely interchanged (cf. Jer 7:31 with its virtual doublet, Jer 32:35; also see Ezek 16:21).[86] Moreover, Jeremiah, in Jer 19:5, condemns the people for burning (that is, sacrificing) children to Baal, the same Baal whom Weinfeld identifies with Molech and with the rites of a non-sacrificial cult. And, in Jer 32:35, Jeremiah identifies this Baal to whom child sacrifices are offered

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[84]A very similar reconstruction has been independently advanced by M. Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion: Assyria, Judah and Israel in the Eighth and Seventh Centuries B.C.E.* (SBLMS 19; Missoula, MT: Scholars, 1974), 77–83, and by D. Plataroti, "Zum Gebrauch des Wortes *mlk* im Alten Testament," *VT* 28 (1978), 286–300.

[85]See Cogan, *Imperialism*, 78.

[86]The Chronicler, too, may indicate knowledge of only one cult, since in 2 Chr 28:3 he changes the verb of 2 Kgs 16:3, *heʿĕbîr*, which is, for Weinfeld, a non-sacrificial term, to *hibʿîr*, indicating sacrifice. There is, to be sure, a textual problem here, but certainly it is possible that, for the Chronicler, *heʿĕbîr* and *hibʿîr* are synonymous. This supposition is further strengthened by comparing Isa 30:33, for the root *bʿr* is also found in Isa 30:33 in conjunction with *mlk*, probably to be pointed *mōlek* rather than MT *melek*. This should indicate that, *contra* Weinfeld, burning (i. e., sacrifice) and *mōlek* are related.

with Molech! Although Jeremiah is facilely equating any act he perceives as idolatrous with Baal worship, his willingness to assign both child sacrifice and Molech to the same cult suggests that Weinfeld's attempts to distinguish between the two are wrong.[87]

Finally, Weinfeld's use of primarily Assyrian evidence to elucidate a Molech cult is not methodologically satisfactory. Although Weinfeld does attempt to show that the Assyrian materials are influenced by Aramaean factors, it is preferable, *a priori*, to use Canaanite data to elucidate biblical materials. And, notwithstanding Weinfeld's attempts to deny its significance,[88] there is, as we shall see, a tremendous amount of evidence from the Phoenician and Punic world that illuminates Hebrew *mōlek*.

A third major attempt to identify a god Molech in the Hebrew Bible has been made by G. C. Heider.[89] Heider's work is by far the most convincing argument presented to date for reading Hebrew *mōlek* as a divine name. Heider bases his analysis on an examination of the personal names and literary materials from Ebla, Mari, Mesopotamia, and, especially, Ugarit. The element *mlk* in the personal names Heider examines, as well as the mythological data from Ugarit, especially from *Ugaritica* 5 (Nos. 2, 7, and 8; RS 24.252, RS 24.244, and RS 24.251 respectively), suggest to Heider the existence of an ancient Semitic deity *mlk*, to be vocalized *mālik* or *malik* on the basis of spelling in syllabic cuneiform. Heider prefers the vocalization *mālik*, arguing that *malik* with a short *a* should have, because of the elision of short *i* after short *a*, collapsed to *malk*. That *malk*, with the *i* elided, does occur in Akkadian is, Heider admits, problematic.[90] The form *milk*, with the

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[87]Weinfeld ("Worship of Molech," *UF* 4 [1972], 141) counters by refusing to take seriously the prophetic literature, which he describes as "moralizing literature whose tendentiousness and poetical fantasy tend to blur the authentic picture of the reality to which it refers."

[88]For a rebuttal of Weinfeld on this issue, see M. Smith, "On Burning Babies," *JAOS* 95 (1975), 477–479.

[89]Heider, *Cult of Molek, passim.*

[90]Heider, *Cult of Molek*, 162–164.

stem vowel *i*, also gives Heider pause.[91]

This ancient Near Eastern god Malik (*mālik*) is, Heider believes, identical with Hebrew Molech (*mōlek*); in fact, Heider argues, the two are etymologically identical. He analyzes *mālik* as the active Qal participle of the root *mlk*. The Hebrew form *mōlek* is also, according to Heider, a Qal active participle of *mlk*, where **māliku* > **mōleku* (by the Canaanite shift and by the "darkening" of *i* to *e* in open syllables). This form **mōleku* or **mōlek* (with the case ending dropped from the proper name) became frozen, Heider feels, in Israelite usage. Thus the expected shift **mōlek* > **mōlēk* never occurred.[92] Heider finds support for his analysis in the Greek translation of *mōlek*, *archōn*, "ruler," which he argues reflects a Hebrew Vorlage with a Qal active participle. Finally, Heider argues that to understand *mōlek* as a divine name makes the best sense grammatically in the passages in which the word occurs.[93]

Heider is correct that the grammar of the *mōlek* passages is problematic. It is hard to know how much weight to assign to the Masoretic pointing and to the Greek tradition, and thus difficult, for example, to determine whether the definite article should precede *mōlek*. In fact no scholar, including Heider, has presented a satisfactory grammatical analysis of the *mōlek* texts, especially Lev 20:2–5.

But by Heider's other points I am not convinced. Heider finds in Semitic personal names evidence for the existence of a god Malik. Some of the personal names cited by Heider could indicate such. But we must caution that the study of Semitic personal names is fraught with problems. The personal names from Mari and Mesopotamia, which are vocalized, are easier; however, it is still often impossible to determine whether the theophoric element of a personal name is an epithet or a divine name. Ugaritic and other west Semitic names written alphabetically are even more difficult. Heider is certainly aware of these problems, but, I fear, not prudent enough. In Heider's Appendix C, for

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[91]Heider, *Cult of Molek*, 106–107.

[92]Heider, *Cult of Molek*, 226–227.

[93]Heider, *Cult of Molek*, 239–245.

example, Heider lists the *mlk* names from Ugarit and marks with an asterisk "names unlikely to contain the divine name M-l-k."[94] Seven names are marked: *Baʿal(dIM)-ma-lak, Šapaš(dUTU)-milku(LUGAL), ymlk, kṯrmlk, pdrmlk, ršpmlk, and špšmlk.* Unmarked names include *abmlk* (= *mA-bi-milku*[*LUGAL*]), *aḫmlk* (= *a-ḫi-milku*[*LUGAL*]), *ilmlk* (= *ilu*[*AN*]-*milku*[*LUGAL*]). Certainly these names could be analyzed, following Heider, as "the divine father is Malik," "the divine brother (or kinsman) is Malik," and "the god is Malik." But equally possible, indeed far more likely, are "the divine father is king," "the divine brother (or kinsman) is king," and "El is king." And surely the name *aḫtmlk* (= *a-ḫa-tu₄-milku*[*LUGAL*]) cannot be understood as "the divine sister (female) is Malik (male)!"

Heider also attributes much importance to names such as *dma-al-ki* and *dmi-il-kum*, seeing in the *dingir* determinative evidence for a divine name Malik.[95] This may be. However, it is important to remember that epithets of a deity can become a deity's personal name. That is, instead of suggesting the existence of a god Malik, a name such as *dma-al-ki* could indicate that a god who takes the epithet "king" also uses "King" as a proper name. The god El, for example, is called Milkom, "King," by his Ammonite worshipers, but El and Milkom are surely not two distinct gods. Rather, Milkom is an epithet of El, elevated to the status of proper name. Students of the Bible will think immediately of Yahweh, a cult epithet meaning "he who creates," which in Israel becomes the proper name of the deity. To understand *mlk* as an epithet in many of the names Heider cites explains why Heider's god Malik is unknown on the pantheon list from Mari,[96] which is problematic for Heider. Conversely, the name *dma-lik* far down (eighty-second entry) on a pantheon list from Ugarit[97] could be explained as a hypostatized

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[94]Heider, *Cult of Molek*, 419.

[95]Heider, *Cult of Molek*, 103.

[96]Heider, *Cult of Molek*, 111–113.

[97]*Ugaritica* 5, Chapitre 1, III-e-2, #119 [RS 20.121], line 82; see Heider, *Cult of Molek*, 117.

epithet.[98]

The proper interpretation of the *Ugaritica* 5 texts is also a matter of some debate. *Ugaritica* 5, 7 (RS 24.244), line 41, suggests the existence of a god Malik at Ugarit, and also, it seems, *Ugaritica* 5, 8 (RS 24.251), line 17.[99] The phrase *rpu mlk ʿlm* in *Ugaritica* 5, 2 (RS 24.252), recto, line 1, verso, lines 6–7, however, is only with great difficulty applied to Heider's Malik, or, indeed, to any deity other than El. The text pictures a god (*il*) judging (*tpṭ*) in the midst of the divine council. Despite attempts to read *il*, the god's name, as the generic "god," the role of judge in the divine council is surely El's. This alone should indicate that the subject of *Ugaritica* 5, 2 (RS 24.252), is El; that the triad of El, Astarte, and Baal, described in *Ugaritica* 5, 2 (RS 24.252), is echoed in Sakkunyaton (*PE* 1.10.31)[100] is further and conclusive proof that *il* and *rpu mlk ʿlm* in *Ugaritica* 5, 2 (RS 24.252), are both references to El.

Even more bothersome in Heider's analysis is the evidence to which Heider seeks to give primary importance, evidence from Ebla, Mari, Mesopotamia, and, especially, Ugarit. While Heider's use of comparative data is certainly more impressive than Weinfeld's, who ignores west Semitic evidence in favor of Assyrian material, Heider's refusal to see in the Phoenician and Punic worlds significant data for illuminating Hebrew *mōlek* is, I think, wrong. Surely first millennium Phoenician and Punic materials, contemporary with the Hebrew Bible, should be given priority over the third and second millennium evidence Heider stresses. This Phoenician and Punic evidence proves, I believe, (1) that "the worship of Molech" and the Phoenician/Punic cult of child sacrifice are one and the same; (2) that Hebrew *mōlek* is not a Semitic divine name or the epithet of any Semitic deity, but is rather to be identified with Phoenician/Punic *mulk*, a technical term of sacrifice;

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[98]As, for example, is the divine name *bêt-ʾēl* at Elephantine. See the discussion of B. Porten, *Archives from Elephantine. The Life of an Ancient Jewish Military Colony* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 1968), 165–170.

[99]But see S. Olyan and M. Smith, "Review of *The Cult of Molek*," *RB* 94 (1987), 273.

[100]Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 21–22.

and (3) that the Masoretic tradition correctly vocalizes *mōlek* (< **mulk*), and that there is no reason to resort to Heider's theory that *mōlek* is a frozen form of the Qal active participle or to the theory, necessarily espoused by scholars such as Weinfeld and Gray, that *mōlek* in the Hebrew Bible is an artificially vocalized form of *melek*, in which the vowels of *bōšet*, "shame," have replaced the original vocalization.[101]

In 1935, O. Eissfeldt published a controversial monograph, *Molk als Opferbegriff im Punischen und Hebräischen und das Ende des Gottes Moloch*.[102] In this monograph Eissfeldt argued that Punic *mulk*, meaning sacrificial offering, and Hebrew *mōlek* were cognate technical terms of child sacrifice and that therefore there was no foreign deity Molech in the Hebrew Bible. Rather, according to Eissfeldt, children were sacrificed in Israel to Yahweh himself.

Eissfeldt, drawing on the earlier work of J. and P. Alquier,[103] J.-B. Chabot,[104] and J. Carcopino[105] began with a study of Punic votive inscriptions, which characteristically contained the expressions *mlk ʾmr* (Latin *molchomor* and various related transcriptions),[106] *mlk ʾdm*, and *mlk bʿl*, as well as other, less frequently occurring, phrases with *mlk*. The term *mlk ʾmr* is the least controversial of the three expressions, and most agree,[107] based on J.- B. Chabot's original interpretation,[108] that

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[101]First proposed by A. Geiger, *Urschrift und Uebersetzungen der Bibel in ihrer Abhängigkeit von der innern Entwickelung des Judenthums* (Breslau: Julius Hainauer, 1857), 299–308.

[102]O. Eissfeldt, *Molk als Opferbegriff im Punischen und Hebräischen und das Ende des Gottes Moloch* (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1935).

[103]J. and P. Alquier, "Stèles votives à Saturne," *CRAIBL* (1931), 21–26.

[104]J.- B. Chabot, "Note complementaire," *CRAIBL* (1931), 26–27.

[105]J. Carcopino, "Survivances par substitution des sacrifices d'enfants dans l'Afrique romaine," *RHR* 106 (1932), 592–599.

[106]For the latest compilation of the Latin material, see Mosca, *Child Sacrifice*, 55, 58a.

[107]For disagreement, see, most recently, M. Weinfeld, "Worship of Molech," *UF* 4 (1972), 135–137, and, less completely, Heider, *Cult of Molek*, 186.

[108]Chabot, "Note complementaire," *CRAIBL* (1931), 27.

the phrase means "*mulk* sacrifice of a lamb." Latin *molch-* must reflect Semitic **mulk* (and cannot possibly be derived from a divine name Molech or Malik). Likewise, Latin *-omor* should reflect Semitic *ʾimmōr*, "lamb," with Proto-Semitic **ʾimmar* > **ʾimmor* (by the Phoenician shift) > *ʾommor* (by vowel harmony).

The phrase *mlk ʾdm* is more difficult, and Eissfeldt suggested it be translated "*mulk* sacrifice of a man" or "*mulk* sacrifice offered by a commoner," the latter of which Eissfeldt preferred.[109] J. G. Février further suggested "*mulk* sacrifice of blood," interpreting *ʾdm* either as **dam*, "blood," with a prosthetic *ʾālep*,[110] or as a root *ʾdm*, meaning "blood."[111] Finally, P. Mosca has proposed "*mulk* sacrifice of a commoner."[112] Of these alternatives Eissfeldt's preferred translation, "*mulk* sacrifice offered by a commoner," is the most unlikely, as is made evident by an inscription from Constantine, el-Ḥofra 29,[113] where a *mlk ʾdm* is offered by a priest (*hkhn*).[114] J. Hoftijzer[115] and P. Mosca[116] have, in addition, marshaled a fairly impressive set of arguments against Février's positions. Mosca's translation is possible, but is argued against by Hos 13:2. That text, which reads *zōbĕḥê ʾādām*, to be translated, "those who sacrifice a man," indicates that, in the context of sacrifice, *ʾādām* should mean "human" and not "commoner."[117] Most therefore now read "*mulk* sacrifice of a man."

The phrase *mlk bʿl* was not believed by Eissfeldt to refer to a *mulk*

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[109]Eissfeldt, *Molk als Opferbegriff*, 13–21.

[110]J. G. Février, "Molchomor," *RHR* 143 (1953), 10–12.

[111]J. G. Février, "Essai de reconstitution du sacrifice *molek*," *JA* 248 (1960), 186, n. 17.

[112]Mosca, *Child Sacrifice*, 75–77.

[113]A. Berthier and R. Charlier, *Le sanctuaire punique d'El-Hofra à Constantine* (Paris: Arts et métiers graphiques, 1955), 31–32.

[114]As pointed out by Mosca, *Child Sacrifice*, 65.

[115]J. Hoftijzer, "Eine Notiz zum punischen Kinderopfer," *VT* 8 (1958), 288–292.

[116]Mosca, *Child Sacrifice*, 66.

[117]As pointed out by F. M. Cross (private communication).

sacrifice, but rather, he felt, was a personal or divine name.[118] But a re-evaluation of the inscriptional evidence available to Eissfeldt,[119] as well as new material,[120] makes clear that *mlk b'l* must too be a sacrificial offering. Exactly what kind of sacrifice the *mlk b'l* is, however, is uncertain: alternatives include (1) "a *mulk* sacrifice offered by a noble," to be compared to Eissfeldt's preferred reading of *mlk 'dm*; (2) "a *mulk* sacrifice of a noble,"[121] indicative of a class distinction between noble (*b'l*) and commoner (*'dm*); or (3) "a *mulk* sacrifice consisting of a suckling" (*bĕ-'ūl*).[122] Although none of these analyses are without problems, it is enough for our purposes to note again the uncontested *mlk* meaning "sacrificial offering."

Having established *mulk* in Phoenician and Punic as a technical term of child sacrifice, Eissfeldt then argued that *mulk* was to be identified with Hebrew *mōlek*. The linguistic material is compelling, since grammatical rules dictate an original form **mulk* underlying Hebrew *mōlek*. In addition, the typical association of child sacrifice with fire in the Hebrew Bible is well paralleled in the classical descriptions of the Phoenician/Punic cults of child sacrifice. Diodorus Siculus writes of the Carthaginians:[123]

> They had among them a bronze statue of Kronos with outstretched hands, palms uppermost, yet inclined towards the ground, so that the child who was placed in these palms would roll off and fall into a pit

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[118]Eissfeldt, *Molk als Opferbegriff*, 26–28.

[119]See Mosca, *Child Sacrifice*, 71–73.

[120]See Stager, "The Rite of Child Sacrifice," *New Light on Ancient Carthage*, 6; also idem, "Carthage," *Phönizier im Westen*, 159; Stager and Wolff, "Child Sacrifice," *BARev* 10/1 (January/February, 1984), 45, 47.

[121]Proposed by Mosca, *Child Sacrifice*, 74–77, and adopted by Stager, "The Rite of Child Sacrifice," *New Light on Ancient Carthage*, 6; also see idem, "Carthage," *Phönizier im Westen*, 159–160; Stager and Wolff, "Child Sacrifice," *BARev* 10/1 (January/February, 1984), 45, 47.

[122]J. G. Février, "Molchomor," *RHR* 143 (1953), 16.

[123]Didorus Siculus, *Library of History* 20.14.6; trans. R. M. Geer, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1954), 181.

> filled with fire.

Kleitarchos also associates the Phoenician and Punic cults with fire:[124]

> There stands in their midst a bronze statue of Kronos, its hands extended over a bronze brazier, the flames of which engulf the child. When the flames fall upon the body, the limbs contract and the open mouth seems almost to be laughing, until the contracted [body] slips quietly into the brazier.

Other similarities between the Phoenician/Punic cult and the biblical material are the fact, as previously noted, that both provide for a substitute of an animal for a child, and some evidence that, in both the Mediterranean world and in Israel, the child is killed before being consigned to the fire. This is hinted at in Gen 22:6, 10, and, for the later period, in Ezek 16:21 and argued most thoroughly for the Phoenician/Punic material by J. Guey.[125] Given all these similarities between Israel and the Phoenician world, I believe, following Eissfeldt, that there is no reason to distinguish between a cult of child sacrifice in the two cultures. In both, *mulk* sacrificial offerings of children were made to the god of child sacrifice, El, called in the Mediterranean by his epithet Baʿl Ḥamōn and in Israel by his epithet Yahweh. In short, no Semitic deity Molech or Melek received child sacrifices in the Hebrew Bible in lieu of the god of Israel. Rather, the cult of child sacrifice was felt in some circles to be a legitimate expression of Yahwistic faith.

Still, how are we to distinguish which children are candidates for the sacrificial vow? The Hebrew Bible, if it specifies exactly who is to be sacrificed to the deity, is, in general, emphatic in its claim that it is the first-born who is to be the victim. This can be seen both in legal material (Exod 13:1–2; 22:29; 34:19), in prophecy (Mic 6:7; Ezek 20:26), and in narrative (Judges 11; 2 Kgs 3:27; Gen 22:2). But Stager's excavations from Carthage make it clear that there is no specific child

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[124]Kleitarchos, *Scholia* to Plato's *Republic*, 337A, as translated by Mosca, *Child Sacrifice*, 22. See also the quote of Kleitarchos on p. 124 above.

[125]J. Guey, "'Moloch' et 'Molchomor': A propos des stèles votives," *Melanges d'Archeologie et d'Histoire* 54 (1937), 94–99.

marked for the deity; rather, any child can be vowed. Does this then mean that we are wrong after all in our attempt to use Phoenician and Punic materials about the *mulk* sacrifice to elucidate the Hebrew Bible?

I would suggest not. Rather, I would prefer to see evolution in the ancient Near Eastern cult of child sacrifice. The older cult did involve only the sacrifice of the first-born. Most biblical traditions keep this prescription alive, as do the traditions ascribed to Sakkunyaton. Philo Byblius records in two separate places in his *Phoenician History* that it was his only (*monogenēs*) son whom El/Kronos sacrificed (*PE* 1.10.33, 1.10.44). Indeed, Ieoud, the name of Kronos' only son as given in the *Phoenician History* (*PE* 1.10.44), may reflect Semitic *yḥd*, "only,"[126] used in connection with child sacrifice in Gen 22:2, 12, 16 and in Judg 11:34. Then in a later period this element of the original cult of child sacrifice was lost, and all children became potential dedicatories to the god. In the biblical record this development is suggested by 2 Chr 28:3 and 2 Chr 33:6, where Ahaz and Manasseh, respectively, are reported as sacrificing their sons (*bānâw*) to the gods; 2 Kgs 16:3 and 2 Kgs 21:6 read "son" (*bĕnô*).

Phoenician evidence, although not unambiguous, may support such a claim. Stager has pointed out that early in the history of the Carthage tophet (seventh and sixth centuries) the human sacrificial victims were, in the main, newborns, buried singly in an urn. Later, in the fourth century, one out of three burial urns contained two to three children from the same family.[127] It is possible to interpret this evidence as indicative of a cultic development. That is, in the earlier period the first-born only (as represented by the burial urns of the single newborns) was sacrificed; then, as the cult evolved, any young child could be vowed (as represented by the multi-burial urns).

Certainly, local evolution was possible in the Phoenician and Punic cult of child sacrifice. Stager's excavations have revealed that early on, in the seventh-century remains from the tophet at Carthage, roughly one

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[126]Attridge and Oden, *Philo of Byblos*, 94, n. 150.

[127]Stager, "The Rite of Child Sacrifice," *New Light on Ancient Carthage*, 4–5; also see Stager and Wolff, "Child Sacrifice," *BARev* 10/1 (January/February, 1984), 49.

out of three burial urns contained animal instead of human bones. In a later (fourth-century) period of the tophet, however, only about one out of ten urns contained the remains of animal bones.[128] As gruesome as it may seem, Carthage's cult likely evolved from one in which animal substitution was a common response to the demand of the deity for child sacrifice to a cult where the deity could be satisfied by the sacrifice of a child alone. I would suggest that as the sacrificial victims changed from animal to child during the cult's evolution, the children who were sacrificed could have also come to include any, rather than just the first-born, child.

There has been some disagreement on whether child sacrifice was a regularly practiced cult in the ancient world or whether the cult functioned only sporadically, in times of crisis. The evidence is not unambiguous. The classical sources generally assume that child sacrifice was performed in response to a crisis. Diodorus Siculus, for example, writes of the Carthaginians' sacrifices of five hundred or more children to Kronos upon the occasion of the Greek siege of Carthage in the late fourth century.[129] The same tradition is recorded by Porphyry[130] and by Philo Byblius, who writes (*PE* 1.10.44):[131]

> Among ancient peoples in critically dangerous situations it was customary for the rulers of a city or nation, rather than lose everyone, to provide the dearest of their children as a propitiatory sacrifice to the avenging deities.

But the excavations at Carthage have revealed no evidence of mass burials; rather, the typical burial pattern involved the careful placement

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[128]Stager, "The Rite of Child Sacrifice," *New Light on Ancient Carthage*, 7; also see Stager and Wolff, "Child Sacrifice," *BARev* 10/1 (January/February, 1984), 40–41.

[129]Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* 20.14.5.

[130]Porphyry, *De abstinentia* 2.56. See also Pompeius Trogus as recounted in Justin, *Epitoma Historiarum Philippicarum* 18.6.11–12; Quintus Curtius (Rufus), *History of Alexander* 4.3.23; Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 1.21.9–15.

[131]Trans. Attridge and Oden, *Philo of Byblos*, 61, 63.

of usually one, sometimes two, and rarely three urns in a single pit.[132] This would indicate a routinized, rather than an occasional, cult of child sacrifice.[133] Moreover, the inscribed votive stelae from Phoenician and Punic sites give no indication of child sacrifice as a response to crisis, but instead demonstrate that child sacrifice was routinely offered in fulfillment of a vow (*ndr*). A typical example of such a stele reads (*CIS* 1, 194):

nṣb mlk bʿl ʾš ndr PN bn PN
lrbt ltnt pn bʿl wlʾdn lbʿl ḥmn
k šmʿ qlʾ

The stele of the *mlk bʿl* which PN
son of PN vowed to the lady, to *tnt*,
the face of Baʿl, and to the Lord,
to Baʿl Ḥamōn, because he heard his voice.

The biblical traditions are also ambiguous concerning the reasons for the cult of child sacrifice. Meša (2 Kgs 3:27) sacrificed his son in a time of crisis in an attempt to alter the tide of a battle which was going against him. Yet the routinized nature of child sacrifice in Israel is indicated by Mic 6:6–7, where the speaker offers "my first-born" as one item in a list of typical sacrifices (burnt offerings, year-old calves, rams, oil). That child sacrifice is routine in Israel is further suggested by the fact that the cult has a regular and well-established cult site, the Tophet in the valley of Ben-Hinnom (2 Kgs 23:10).

I believe it is this routinized cult of child sacrifice in which the community condemned in Isa 57:3–13 participates. We know from legal, narrative, and prophetic materials in the Bible that child sacrifice was practiced in Israel throughout her history, and that the rite of child sacrifice continued even after Josiah's reforms. The people who sacrificed their children in Isa 57:3–13 were simply continuing to

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[132]Stager, "The Rite of Child Sacrifice," *New Light on Ancient Carthage*, 4; also see Stager and Wolff, "Child Sacrifice," *BARev* 10/1 (January/February, 1984), 44.

[133]See also Tertullian, *Apologeticus* 9.2, as analyzed by M. Smith, "On Burning Babies," *JAOS* 95 (1975), 477.

worship as their ancestors had done. Also the fact that the other cults condemned in Isa 57:3–13, fertility cults and cults of the dead, were routinized cults in sixth-century Judah suggests that child sacrifice was likewise a routine ritual.

Most noteworthy, however, is the locus of the slaughter of 57:3–13: in the wadis (*banněḥālîm*). This recalls the site of the regular cult of child sacrifice, the valley of Ben-Hinnom west and southwest of Jerusalem (2 Kgs 23:10; 2 Chr 28:3; 33:6; Jer 7:31, 32; 19:2, 6; 32:35). This valley, traditionally identified with the wadi er-Rababi, formed the ancient boundary between Judah and Benjamin (Josh 15:8; 18:16). But no doubt its renown is due to its later association with child sacrifice. Indeed, it has been suggested that the term "valley" alone, *gyʾ* can stand for the famous valley of Ben-Hinnom, as in Jer 2:23, "see your way in the valley."[134] Such an interpretation is also possible in Isa 57:5, where the term *banněḥālîm*, "in the wadis," could allude to the cult site of Ben-Hinnom.

But the use of the plural *něḥālîm* in Isa 57:5 instead of the singular, as well as the parallel to *banněḥālîm, sĕʿipê hassĕlāʿîm*, indicates that *banněḥālîm* alludes to more than just the valley of Ben-Hinnom. An initial hint about the poet's referent can be garnered from W. H. Irwin, who, in his analysis of Isa 57:6, which describes the "perished ones of the wadi," has suggested that the *naḥal*, the wadi, was a traditional place of burial in Israel.[135] Biblical materials support this. Elijah kills the prophets of Baal at the wadi Kishon (1 Kgs 18:40). The Deuteronomists (2 Kgs 23:6) and Jeremiah (Jer 31:40; cf. Jer 26:23) view the wadi Kidron as a graveyard. Later tradition, of course, locates the graves of Jehoshaphat, Absalom, and Zechariah in the Kidron Valley.

Archaeological evidence also verifies Irwin's suggestion. The wadi Kidron and the valley of Ben-Hinnom are honeycombed with ancient tombs.[136] T. J. Lewis in addition notes that N. Avigad has published

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[134]De Vaux, *Old Testament Sacrifice*, 74.

[135]Irwin, "Smooth Stones," *CBQ* 29 (1967), 37.

[136]Lewis (*Cults*, 148, n. 78, and "Death Cult Imagery," *Hebrew Annual Review* 11 [1987], 272, n. 21) cites N. Avigad, *Ancient Monuments in the*

two tomb inscriptions from the Kidron valley,[137] the first of which is tantalizingly reminiscent of the condemnation of the tomb of Shebna in Isa 22:15–16; the second describes the valley tomb as *ḥdr bktp ḥṣr*, "burial chamber in the side of the cliff,"[138] or *ḥdr bktp ḥṣryḥ*, "burial chamber in the side of a rock-cut tomb."[139] This description of a tomb of the wadi as a chamber or cave is of interest for our analysis of Isa 57:5, for it seems that *naḥal* itself can have a secondary meaning of "chamber," "cave," or even "grave." In Job 28:4 *naḥal* means "tunnel" or "miner's shaft." Also in Job, in Job 21:33, we read:

> When he is borne to the grave, watch is kept over his tomb;
> the clods of the *naḥal* are sweet to him,
> all men follow after him,
> and those who go before him are innumerable.

Here, in a context of death, *naḥal*, it seems, means tomb or grave.

The poet of Isa 57:5 is playing with this double meaning of "wadi" and "grave" for *naḥal*.[140] The meaning "wadi" alludes to the valley of Ben-Hinnom, the traditional place of child sacrifice in Israel; the meaning "grave" is highlighted by the parallel to *bannĕḥālīm*, *sĕʿipê hassĕlāʿîm*, which suggests the cave-like tombs that lie in the valley walls. The fact that *nĕḥālīm* is repeated twice in successive verses (v 5 and 6) further indicates a *double entendre*; compare the double meaning

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Kidron Valley (Jerusalem: Bialek Institute, 1954), *passim* (Hebrew).

[137]N. Avigad, "The Epitaph of a Royal Steward from Siloam Village," *IEJ* 3 (1953), 137–152; idem, "The Second Tomb-Inscription of the Royal Steward," *IEJ* 5 (1955), 163–166.

[138]So Avigad, "The Second Tomb-Inscription," *IEJ* 5 (1955), 166.

[139]So D. Ussishkin, "On the Shorter Tomb Inscription from the 'Tomb of the Royal Steward,'" *BASOR* 196 (1969), 19–21.

[140]On this meaning of "grave" for *naḥal* in Isa 57:5, see M. Weise, "Jesaja 57 5f.," *ZAW* 72 (1960), 28–31, and C. A. Kennedy, "Isaiah 57:5–6: Tombs in the Rocks, " *BASOR* 275 (1989), 47–52. For *naḥal*, "grave," elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, see *HALAT* 3, 649a, s. v. *naḥal*, where possible occurrences in Job 21:33; 22:24; 28:4; Neh 2:15; and Isa 7:19 are suggested.

of *yād* in v 8 and v 10.[141] Thus the poet of Isa 57:3–13, by invoking the image of the tombs of the wadi graveyard in Isa 57:5 and in 57:9a, fills our minds with dead spirits, spirits to whom he turns in vv 6 and 9b as he castigates the people for their involvement with cults of the dead.

Libations for the Dead

The most complete study of death-cult imagery in Isaiah 57 is that of T. J. Lewis.[142] As Lewis points out, the very existence of any Israelite cult of the dead has traditionally been denied by almost all scholars. Lewis cites, for example, Y. Kaufmann, who rejects even the suggestion of such cults: "the realm of the dead, the rites connected with death and burial . . . play no part in the religion of YHWH . . . nowhere is ancestor-worship or a cult of the dead referred to."[143] R. de Vaux similarly writes that a cult of the dead "n'a jamais existé en Israël."[144] But in the light of growing evidence from the Canaanite world, in particular evidence from Ugarit, Lewis and others now propose that some cults of the dead were practiced in Israel.[145] Participation in such cults, to be sure, often did not have the approval of the biblical writers, and this is certainly the case in Isa 57:3–13. There the prophet, fanatical in his devotion to "pure" Yahwism, as is typical of the prophetic class, harshly condemns the people for practicing death-cult rites. But despite the prophet's opinion, the worshipers

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[141]See above, nn. 14 and 19.

[142]Lewis, *Cults*, 143–158; idem, "Death Cult Imagery," *Hebrew Annual Review* 11 (1987), *passim*.

[143]Y. Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel From its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile* (trans. and abridged M. Greenberg; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1960), 311, 313.

[144]R. de Vaux, *Les institutions de l'Ancien Testament* 1 (Paris: Les éditions du Cerf, 1958), 98.

[145]See, for example, W. F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, 204 (cited by Lewis, *Cults*, 3, n. 10); K. Spronk, *Beatific Afterlife in Ancient Israel and the Ancient Near East* (AOAT 219; Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1986); M. S. Smith and E. M. Bloch-Smith, "Death and Afterlife in Ugarit and Israel," *JAOS* 108 (1988), 277–284.

condemned do seem to have considered a cult of the dead to be a legitimate part of their religious expression.

One particular death cult in which the people castigated in Isa 5:3–13 seem to have engaged is the ritual of providing drink and food offerings for the deceased, a practice best attested in Mesopotamian evidence. In Mesopotamia a caretaker, usually a relative of the deceased, called the *pāqidu* (literally "one who takes care of or attends to") provided three essential services to the dead. The *pāqidu* "called the name" of the deceased (*šumu zakāru*), "poured the water libation" (*mê naqû*), and "provided the funerary offerings" (*kispa kasāpu*);[146] the term *kispu* also refers to the funerary cult in general.[147] In Ugarit the recently published "Ugaritic Funerary Text,"[148] which is entitled by its Canaanite author *spr dbḥ ẓlm*, "the book of the sacrifices of the shades," describes a ritual in which the dead ancestors of the recently dead king Niqmaddu III are summoned, along with Niqmaddu, and seven offerings are made to the

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[146]See, for example, *CT* 16, 10.5.5–14: *lu-u e-ṭim-mu šá pa-qi-da la i-šú-ú KI.MIN lu-u e-ṭim-mu šá ka-sip ki-is-pi la i-šú-ú KI.MIN lu-u e-ṭim-mu šá na-aq me-e la i-šú-ú KI.MIN lu-u e-ṭim-mu šá za-kir₈ šu-me la i-šú-ú KI.MIN*, "whether you be a ghost who has none to be its *pāqidu*, or whether you be a ghost who has none to make him a funerary offering, or whether you be a ghost who has none to pour out the water libation, or whether you be a ghost who has none to call out his name." Cf. Gilg 12.153–154, and BM 80328, lines 36–38 (published by J. J. Finkelstein, "The Genealogy of the Hammurapi Dynasty," *JCS* 20 [1966], 95–118, esp. 114–115). For analysis, see M. Bayliss, "The Cult of the Dead Kin in Assyria and Babylonia," *Iraq* 35 (1973), 115–125, Finkelstein; *JCS* 20 (1966), 115–116; Lewis, *Cults*, 32. Also compare A. Heidel, *The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1946, 1949), 151–170, and the essays of A. Skaist, A. Tsukimoto, M. Birot, and P. Xella in *Death in Mesopotamia* (ed. B. Alster; Mesopotamia 8; Copenhagen: Akademisk forlag, 1980), 123–128, 129–138, 139–150, and 151–160, respectively.

[147]Bayliss, "Cult of the Dead Kin," *Iraq* 35 (1973), 116; see also *CAD* K (vol. 8), 425b–427a, s. v. *kispu*.

[148]A. Caquot, "Hebreu et Araméen," *Annuaire du College de France* 75 (1975–76), 427–429; for a full bibliography of subsequent treatments, see Lewis, *Cults*, 5–6, and nn. 1–11.

assembled spirits.[149] In both Mesopotamia and Ugarit the purpose of such sacrifices is to assure the well-being of the dead and thus to ensure their favorable actions on behalf of the living. Simultaneously and perhaps more important, the sacrifices guarantee the dead's omission of malevolent activities toward those still alive.[150]

Evidence from the biblical period for offerings to the dead is elusive. The bulk of the data are late: Bar 6:27, "Gifts are placed before them [false idols] just as before the dead"; Sir 30:18, "Good things poured out of a mouth that is closed are like offerings of food placed upon a grave"; and Tob 4:17, "Place your bread on the grave of the righteous, but give none to the sinners." Within the canonical books Deut 26:14 contains the only certain mention of a cult of offerings to the dead,[151] and even there, the text is less than clear. Moses, speaking of the tithe, forbids the Israelites to offer to the dead from the tithe; most scholars presume that all offerings to the dead are implicitly condemned here.[152] Even more ambiguous is the fifth commandment, "Honor your father and your mother" (Exod 20:12, Deut 5:16; cf. Deut 27:16). To honor correctly one's progenitors may well involve providing them with

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[149]See W. T. Pitard, "The Ugaritic Funerary Text RS 34.126," *BASOR* 232 (1978), 65–75; Lewis, *Cults*, 31–35.

[150]Well described by Lewis, *Cults*, 31–35, who cites "The Genealogy of the Hammurapi Dynasty," lines 39–43, in which the dead ancestors are beseeched to "come" (*al-ka-nim-ma*), "eat this" (*an-ni-a-am a-ak-la*), "drink this" (*an-ni-a-am ši-ti-a*), and "bless" (*ku-ur-ba*) Ammisaduqa, son of Ammiditana, king of Babylon; see Finkelstein, *JCS* 20 (1966), 96–97, 115–116. Similarly, Lewis notes, the "Ugaritic Funerary Text," lines 31–34, ends with a benediction, a request for the well-being (*šlm*) of Ammurapi, the living king of Ugarit, and for the well-being of his sons, his kinsmen, his house, and for the city of Ugarit and her gates.

[151]Ps 106:28 does mention "sacrifices for the dead," but the Psalmist believes such offerings to be a feature of Moabite (following Num 25:1–5) or Midianite (following Num 25:6–16), not Israelite, religion.

[152]See G. E. Wright, "The Book of Deuteronomy: Introduction and Exegesis," *IB* 2 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1953), 486–487; Lewis, *Cults*, 172, n. 2; Irwin, "Smooth Stones," *CBQ* 29 (1967), 40. But see H. C. Brichto, "Kin, Cult, Land and Afterlife—A Biblical Complex," *HUCA* 44 (1973), 29 and n. 45.

offerings upon their deaths;[153] as Lewis points out, the root *kbd* can be used of such an obligation in Akkadian.[154] Of course the commandment, stemming from the period of the tribes, each of which was led by a clan head or patriarch, obligates one to respect and honor, that is, obey, living progenitors as well.

In turning to Isa 57:3–13, we also confront ambiguity. In v 6b the people are castigated for pouring out libations and bringing up offerings "to them" (*lāhem*). Who these recipients of the offerings are, however, has until recently been unclear,[155] for the phrase *bḥlqy nḥl*, which identifies who "they" are, has always been a *crux interpretum* in Isa 57:6. Those who seek to explain the MT as it stands usually translate, "in the smooth stones of the wadi is your portion," taking *bḥlqy* from *ḥlq* II, "to be smooth," and supplying "stones" as necessary for the sense. A typical spokesman of this school is J. McKenzie, who comments that the smooth stones "are probably stones chosen for their shape and size to be set up as symbols of the male fertility deity, the *maṣṣēbôt*."[156] Others, who are bothered by the degree of speculation involved in interpreting the received text, emend: H. L. Ginsberg, for example, suggests either *bḥlqm nḥlt ḥlqk*, "in their portion hast thou inherited thy portion," or *bḥlqm npl ḥlqk*, "in their portion is thy portion fallen."[157] Emendations such as these, however, suffer from the loss of the paronomasia between *bḥlqy* and *ḥlqk*.

The solution to the verse lies neither in emendation nor in interpretation. Rather, the correct explanation of Isa 57:6, as was pointed out in 1967 by W. H. Irwin, is to seek another meaning for

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[153]See Brichto, "Kin, Cult, Land and Afterlife," *HUCA* 44 (1973), 30–31; also L. E. Stager, "The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel," *BASOR* 260 (1985), 23.

[154]Lewis, *Cults*, 177–178.

[155]For a good introduction to the problem, see M. Weise, "Jesaja 57 5f.," *ZAW* 72 (1960), 25–32, but note that Weise's proposed solution is impossible.

[156]J. McKenzie, *Second Isaiah*, 158.

[157]Ginsberg, "Some Emendations," *JBL* 69 (1950), 59.

ḫlq.[158] Irwin identified *bḫlqy* in Isa 57:6 with Semitic *ḫlq*, "to die, perish." Lewis has cited as proof of this etymology a well-known passage in Ugaritic (*CTA* 5.6.9–10; cf. *CTA* 6.1.41–43), where we read:

mt aliyn bʿl	Dead is Mighty Baal,
ḫlq zbl bʿl arṣ	Perished is the Prince, Lord of Earth.

Lewis, moreover, has noted cognates to *ḫlq* in Akkadian (*ḫalāqu*, "to disappear, to perish"), Ethiopic (*ḫalqa*, "to come to an end, to perish, to disappear"), and Arabic (*ḫaliqa*, "to be old, worn out"). Lewis also cites J. A. Hackett,[159] who, following, in part, J. Hoftijzer,[160] has identified *ḫlq* in the South Canaanite or Aramaic Balaam text from Deir ʿAllā (Combination 2, line 11).[161] The existence of the root *ḫlq*, "to die, perish," in biblical Hebrew was first suggested by M. Dahood in 1963, and again championed by Dahood in 1964, 1965, and 1966.[162] Although Dahood identified several possible occurrences of the root in the Hebrew Bible,[163] it remained for Irwin to see in *ḫlq*, "to perish, die," the key for unlocking Isa 57:6. Following Irwin, the verse is to be translated:

> With the perished of the wadi[164] is your portion,
> they, they are your lot.

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[158]Irwin, "Smooth Stones," *CBQ* 29 (1967), 32–33.

[159]J. A. Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā* (HSM 31; Chico, CA: Scholars, 1980, 1984), 67.

[160]J. Hoftijzer, "Interpretation and Grammar," *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla* (ed. J. Hoftijzer and G. van der Kooij; Leiden: Brill, 1976), 243.

[161]Lewis, *Cults*, 148; idem, "Death Cult Imagery," *Hebrew Annual Review* 11 (1987), 272.

[162]See M. Dahood, "Hebrew-Ugaritic Lexicography I," *Bib* 44 (1963), 548; "Hebrew-Ugaritic Lexicography II," *Bib* 45 (1964), 408; *Ugaritic-Hebrew Philology*, 59; "Hebrew-Ugaritic Lexicography IV," *Bib* 47 (1966), 405; *Psalms* I, 35, 73, 99, and 207.

[163]Pss 5:10; 12:4; 17:14; 73:18; Hos 10:2; Job 21:17; and Lam 4:16.

[164]Note again the wadi as a traditional place of burial in Israel; see above, pp. 141–143.

> Even to them you have poured out a libation,
> you have offered up an offering.

But the question still nags: is this necessarily a cult of the dead? In similar cults of the dead in Ugarit and Mesopotamia, two components are necessary: (1) the rite itself of pouring out libations and making offerings, and (2) the anticipated result of the rite, that is, the belief that one assures the well-being of the living by providing offerings to the dead. Without the second component, the first is religiously meaningless, a ritual without cultic significance.

Certainly here in Isa 57:3–13 the first component of the cult is unambiguously present. But is the second? Irwin himself says no, although he does not elaborate in detail his reasons, suggesting only that the offerings to the dead are condemned here because they have "pagan" overtones.[165] More thorough analyses come from R. de Vaux and, in particular, from Y. Kaufmann, although neither of them speak directly to Isa 57:6, to be sure. According to Kaufmann, all the biblical descriptions of rites performed on behalf of the dead (burial of the corpse, the erecting of a monument, and feeding the deceased) are acts of familial devotion, without religious significance. Although the people of Israel did offer food and drink to the dead, Kaufmann maintains that, unlike the inhabitants of Mesopotamia and Ugarit, the Israelites performed the ritual of offering to the dead without anticipating magical or apotropaic results; the ritual has no cultic meaning and is thus not a cult of the dead.[166] So too de Vaux, who acknowledges that offerings are made to the dead, but insists that these offerings, "n'indiquent rien de plus qu'une croyance à la survie et un sentiment d'affection envers les defunts. Ce ne sont pas des actes d'un cult des mortes."[167]

But I, following Lewis, would interpret otherwise. Elsewhere in Isa 57:3–13 there is found clear evidence of the people's belief in the efficacy of dead spirits, a belief that these spirits are able to be

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[165]Irwin, "Smooth Stones," *CBQ* 29 (1967), 39–40.

[166]Kaufmann, *Religion of Israel*, 313.

[167]De Vaux, *Les institutions de l'Ancien Testament* 1, 98.

manipulated by and are able to assist the living. And, if there is evidence of such a belief elsewhere in Isa 57:3–13, this would suggest that the belief is implicit in Isa 57:6 as well. That is, in 57:6 food and drink offerings were made to dead spirits in order to gain benefit for the living.

The evidence in question is found in v 9b and v 13. In v 9b the people of Jerusalem are condemned for sending envoys down to Sheol. Some see this reference to Sheol as metaphorical, indicating the lengths to which the apostates are willing to go in their worship of foreign gods.[168] But the images of death already encountered in vv 5–6 (the reference to *naḥal* as a traditional place of burial, as well as the descriptions of food and drink poured out to those who have perished in the wadi, *ḥlqy nḥl*) suggest that Sheol in v 9b must be taken literally. Moreover, as Lewis points out,[169] the root *špl* in west Semitic languages is elsewhere used in conjunction with Sheol to refer to necromantic rituals (Isa 29:4; RS 34.126.22 [= *KTU* 1.161.22]). The conclusion is obvious. In Isa 57:9b the people of post-exilic Jerusalem are accused of engaging in necromancy.

Necromancy is mentioned somewhat frequently, although never favorably, in the Hebrew Bible. The most famous necromantic incident in the Bible is, of course, Saul's encounter with the witch at Endor (1 Sam 28:3–25).[170] Saul, terrified by the Philistines and unsure of what to do, attempts to consult the deity by the legitimate means of dreams, lots, and prophets. But Saul, having fallen out of favor with Yahweh, is not answered, and in his panic Saul turns to the medium at Endor in an attempt to communicate with his deceased counselor, Samuel.

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[168]For such an interpretation of *ʿd šʾwl* as purely metaphorical and without literal meaning, see, in particular, D. Winton Thomas, "A Consideration of Some Unusual Ways of Expressing the Superlative in Hebrew," *VT* 3 (1953), 223–224, who translates the phrase as "to the lowest depths," connoting "utter debasement."

[169]Lewis, *Cults*, 151; idem, "Death Cult Imagery," *Hebrew Annual Review* 11 (1987), 275.

[170]For the most recent discussion, see Lewis, *Cults*, 104–117, a discussion on which I draw heavily.

The details of the necromantic ritual are not specified to the degree that we would like. The ritual takes place at night, and this may well have been a necessary aspect of the cult. Hittite and Greek necromantic rituals, as analyzed by H. A. Hoffner, also take place at night.[171] Lewis[172] has suggested that Saul's fast before the ritual (1 Sam 28:20) was also a required part of the rite, and, although there is no certain evidence for this, I suspect Lewis is correct. Finally, comparative evidence assembled by Hoffner indicates that sacrifices are typically offered before the necromantic rite. Although this is not mentioned in 1 Samuel 28, Isa 57:6, with its mention of the offerings and libations brought to the dead of the wadi, is certainly germane here. There is, unfortunately, no hint of either a nocturnal setting or fasting in Isa 57:9b.

The result of the necromantic ritual in 1 Samuel 28 is that the ghost of Samuel appears. The word used for Samuel's ghost is *ʾĕlōhim*. The meaning of *ʾĕlōhim* in this context has been greatly clarified by Ugaritic data, for in Ugarit, the cognate term *ilu* can be a designation of a dead spirit. Noteworthy here are *CTA* 6.6.44–47, where *rpim*, "the ghosts," *ilnym*, "the divinities," *ilm*, "the divine ones," and *mtm*, "the dead," are all in parallelism, and *KTU* 1.113, "The Ugaritic King List," verso, where the divine determinative is placed before the name of each deceased king.[173] The same usage is well known elsewhere in the ancient Near East, in the Phoenician inscription from Pyrgi, in Hittite death rituals, in Akkadian personal names, and in the Hebrew Bible (Isa 8:19).[174] What is of particular interest to us among these terms for the dead is *rpum*, for in the "Ugaritic Funerary Text" (RS 34.126), lines 2–3, and in the Kirta cycle (*CTA* 15.3.3–4 [restored] and 14–15), *rpum*

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[171]See H. A. Hoffner, "Second Millennium Antecedents to the Hebrew *ʾôb*," *JBL* 86 (1967), 393, and Hoffner's Text #2 and Text #8.

[172]Lewis, *Cults*, 114.

[173]See also H. A. Hoffner's discussion of Ugaritic *ilib*, which Hoffner translates as "the spirit/god of (or from) the pit." See Hoffner, "Antecedents to Hebrew *ʾôb*," *JBL* 86 (1967), 387–388.

[174]For the most recent and thorough discussion of all this data, see Lewis, *Cults*, 49–50.

occurs parallel to a fifth term for deceased spirits, *qbṣm*.

Lewis correctly reminds us of Isa 57:13a, *qbwṣyk*. Although frequently emended to *šiqqûṣayik*,[175] or even to *bĕṣûqayik* based on the G,[176] the MT is surely to be retained. The *qbwṣyk* condemned in v 13 are none other than the deceased spirits summoned in the necromantic ritual in v 9b. How very fitting, then, is the poet's judgment on these ghostly spirits (v 13):

> The wind will carry all of them off,
> a breath will take them away.

Crucial to note here is the implicit assumption of the witch of Endor story and of Isa 57:3–13: necromancy does work; ghosts can be raised from the dead for the benefit of the living. Isa 57:3–13 is subtle in this regard, but in v 12b and 13a the prophet, speaking for Yahweh, acknowledges the people's belief that the dead can benefit the living by poking fun at such a notion. Speaking of the *qbwṣym*, the ghosts summoned through necromancy, he says:

> They will not help you when you cry out,
> Your gathered spirits will not save you!

Whatever the people may think, the poet believes that the spirits of the dead are powerless.

Now let us return to v 6. In previous discussion of that verse we asked whether drink and food offerings were provided to the dead in order to gain benefit for the living or whether such offerings were without religious connotations. Analysis of vv 9b and 13 should surely indicate that the living did believe in the propitiatory nature of these sacrifices and thus that the ritual described in v 6 should be defined as a cult of the dead. Again, the doctrines of Yahwism espoused by our prophet had no room for such a cult, but, as Isa 57:3–13 indicates, cults of the dead were a part of the religion of some segment of the

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[175]McKenzie, *Second Isaiah*, 157; Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 323.

[176]P. Skehan, "Some Textual Problems in Isaia," *CBQ* 22 (1960), 55.

population.[177]

Under Every Green Tree

The predominant image in Isa 57:3–13 is sexual: Jerusalem and her citizens are pictured as a harlot. Already in v 3 the language of adultery (*n'p*) and harlotry (*znh*) is introduced. The sexual image recurs and is expanded on in v 5, where the people are attacked for engaging in sexual intercourse under trees; such behavior, elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, is clearly associated with some type of cultic ritual whose goal is to "emulate and stimulate"[178] the gods who brought fertility (Hos 4:12–13; Isa 1:29; 1 Kgs 14:23–24; Jer 2:20; 3:6, 13).[179] The sacred nature of the intercourse in Isa 57:5 is indeed indicated by a pun in the Hebrew, for the word for "terebinths" among which the Israelites are accused of lusting, *'ēlîm*, is the same as the word for "gods." That is, one can simultaneously read in v 5a, "you who burn with lust among the terebinths" and "you who burn with lust among the gods." The G translator of Isa 57:3–13 in fact was so taken in by the pun that he even

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[177]The relation between the offerings cult described in v 6 and the necromantic ritual alluded to in v 9b and v 13 is of interest beyond the fact, as just noted, that both have in common a belief in the efficacy of dead spirits. The "Ugaritic Funerary Text" and the "Genealogy of the Hammurapi Dynasty" discussed above both describe a ritual feeding of dead spirits which looks very like the offerings cult described in v 6. But, in the two texts, the dead spirits are summoned to "come and eat," implying necromancy. Hittite, Assyrian, and Greek texts also describe food and libations offered to the dead, who are then lured up out of the underworld and into the presence of the living by these offerings (Hoffner, "Antecedents to Hebrew *'ôb*," *JBL* 86 [1967], 394–396). Although it is surely not the case that necromancy is implied every time dead spirits are fed, the two cults, a cult of offerings to the dead and a cult of necromancy, are to some degree intertwined. Thus the poet's allusions to both in Isa 57:3–13 are nothing but appropriate, for each cult, to some degree, implies the other.

[178]The words are those of M. H. Pope, "Fertility Cults," *IDB* 2 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), 265a.

[179]This is discussed more fully below, pp. 185–194 (Chapter 4).

translated *ʾēlīm* as *eidōla*, "gods."[180]

The picture of Jerusalem as a harlot is developed most fully in vv 7–8. Clearly some kind of sexual activity is suggested there by the thrice-mentioned bed which the harlot Jerusalem sets up. And again, a clever word play demonstrates that this sexual activity is religious in nature, for, as we have already noted,[181] the word for bed, *miškāb*, differs by only one letter from the word for shrine, *miškān*. Recall, moreover, that the reference to offering sacrifice at the "bed," as well as the notice of its "door and doorpost," make clear that the *miškāb/miškān* pun is intentional.

Exegetes have described further sexual imagery at the beginning of v 8, where the symbol (*zikkārôn*) which the harlot erects is probably to be interpreted as a phallic image. This is yet once more indicated by word play; the word for symbol, *zikkārôn*, makes a pun on the word for male, *zākār*. The word *yād* at the end of v 8 is also sexual in its referent and should be translated "phallus" or "phallic symbol."[182]

But, as T. J. Lewis points out, *yād* not only carries connotations of fertility in biblical Hebrew, it also carries connotations of death. In 2 Sam 18:18 the monument or memorial erected for the dead Absalom is called a *yād*; similar uses of *yād* with the meaning "mortuary stele" can be found in 1 Sam 15:12 and Isa 56:5.[183] Moreover, Lewis has demonstarted that this ambiguity in v 8 with regard to the meaning of *yād* is hardly coincidental, as is indicated by the fact that the two other key words of fertility in vv 7–8, *zikkārôn* and *miškāb*, also suggest simultaneously images of death.[184] Thus like *yād*, *zikkārôn*, according to Lewis, can mean a memorial stele, a part of the ancient Israelite death-cult. The root *zkr* in fact means "to remember." Likewise, *miškāb*

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[180]See above, n. 6.

[181]Above, pp. 113–114.

[182]See above, n. 14.

[183]And cf. the modern Israeli Holocaust memorial, Yad va-Shem.

[184]Lewis, *Cults*, 149–150; idem, "Death Cult Imagery, *Hebrew Annual Review* 11 (1987), 273–274.

can also mean "grave" or "resting place,"[185] as it does in Isa 57:2, a verse which precedes and is probably in some way related to our poem.[186] In sum, it seems clear that Lewis is correct in arguing that the vocabulary used in Isa 57:7–8 is chosen by the poet for its paronomasia, specifically, for the sake of suggesting, with each word, images of both fertility and death.[187]

Lewis further demonstrates that fertility and death imagery are also interwoven in vv 5–6. These verses, however, do more than simply explore the thematically intertwined nature of life and death; instead, vv 5–6 describe fertility *cults* and *cults* of the dead as interwoven. In addition, a third ritual is added: child sacrifice. Thus the poet describes sacred sexual intercourse taking place "under every green tree" (v 5a), the slaughter of children in valleys (v 5b), and libations poured out to the dead (v 6a, b). Moreover, these rites are all mentioned in one breath,

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[185]Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible *miškāb* means "grave" in Ezek 32:25 and in 2 Chr 16:14. (Lewis, *Cults*, 150, n. 84; idem, "Death Cult Imagery," *Hebrew Annual Review* 11 [1987], 273, n. 25). In extra-biblical literature, note Tabnit (*KAI* 13), line 8, Eshmunazor (*KAI* 14), lines 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 21, and Deir ʿAllā, Combination 2, line 11. A late (first-century B.C.E.) inscription which could be added to this list is the Bĕnê Ḥāzîr inscription, line 1, found in G. A. Cooke, *Textbook of North-Semitic Inscriptions* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1903), 341 (#148A).

[186]See above, n. 1.

[187]On this phenomenon of paronomasia throughout Second Isaiah, see C. C. Torrey (*The Second Isaiah. A New Interpretation* [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928], 199–202), who in 1928 suggested that Isaiah 40–66 is characterized by word play. Torrey noted both puns where the author(s) of these chapters repeated words twice, employing a word "first in the one signification, sufficiently indicated by the context, and then immediately repeating it in the other sense" (p. 199), and puns based on a *double entendre*, where one word is used unrepeated with two distinct senses. Both types of word play are found in Isa 57:3–13. The use of the root *ḥlq* in v 6a and of the root *yd* in vv 8 and 10 are examples of repeating a word with an altered meaning; the meanings of *miškāb, zikkārôn,* and *yād* in vv 7–8 are examples of the device of the *double entendre*. See, in addition to Torrey, G. R. Driver, "Linguistic and Textual Problems: Isaiah XL–LXVI," *JTS* 36 (1935), 406, but cf. D. F. Payne, "Characteristic Word-Play in 'Second Isaiah': A Reappraisal," *JSS* 12 (1967), 207–229.

so to speak. Nothing intervenes between the notices of the three activities.

We find the same phenomenon if we look beyond vv 7–8 and vv 5–6 to the complete list of condemned behaviors in vv 5–9. There we detect the following structure:

I. a. fertility cult (v 5a; sexual activity under sacred trees);
   b. child sacrifice (v 5b; slaughtering children in the wadis);
   c. cult of the dead (v 6a, b; offerings to those who have perished);

II. a. fertility cult (vv 7, 8; the harlot, Jerusalem, sets up her bed/shrine);
   b. child sacrifice (v 9a; anointing of the *mulk*-sacrifice);
   c. cult of the dead (v9b; necromancy).

Clearly this outline indicates that there is in the prophet's mind an organic unity between fertility rituals, child sacrifice, and cults of the dead. But what is the basis for this unity?

Let us begin with child sacrifice. We have already noted that this ritual, in the ancient Semitic world, was a cult of the god El.[188] This association of El with child sacrifice may at first appear surprising, since El is regularly called the "Kindly One" and the "Compassionate One" at Ugarit (*lṭpn, dpʾd*) and "Merciful One" in the Proto-Sinaitic inscriptions (*d ṯb*). Moreover, according to Ugaritic myth, El is the progenitor *par excellence*. He is called *ab*, "father," both in the somewhat enigmatic epithet *ab šnm*, "father of years,"[189] and in the epithet *ab adm*, "father of humanity." El is also *ab bn il*, "the father of

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[188]Above, pp. 124–125.

[189]For this translation, see W. F. Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, 72; F. M. Cross, "*ʾēl*," *TDOT* 1 (ed. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren; Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1974), 245. For other possibilities for *šnm*, see U. Oldenburg, *The Conflict Between El and Baʿal in Canaanite Religion* (Leiden: Brill, 1969), 17, and M. Pope, *ʾEl in the Ugaritic Texts* (Leiden: Brill, 1955), 32–34.

the gods," and is called "his father," "my father," "her father," and "your father" by different gods in different contexts. A poet, while referring to Baal, who is literally the son of Dagan, can thus say (*CTA* 3.5.43; 4.1.5; 4.4.47; etc.):

ṯr il abh	Bull El, his father,
il mlk d yknnh	King El, who created him.

The title *ṯr il*, "Bull El," is also to be noted here; the bull is a common fertility symbol, and El's epithet *ṯr* may refer to his procreative powers.[190] We cannot, however, be certain, since the bull can also symbolize strength and might, attributes which are also part of El's character.[191]

Other epithets used of El at Ugarit are *bny bnwt*, "the creator of creatures," *ḫtkk*, "your patriarch,"[192] *qnyn*, "our creator," which is paralleled by *d yknnn*, "who created us" (*CTA* 10.3.6).[193] The epithet *bny bnwt* especially alludes to El's procreative role, for *bny* is a common element in personal names which refer to childbirth (see, for example, *ya/ibni-DN*, "DN created the child," and *DN-bani*, "DN created me").[194] The verb *bny* is also connected with procreation in myth. In the Atra-hasis epic, the gods say to Mami, the birth goddess, "Create (*binīma*) lullû-man, let him bear the yoke" (Tab. 1, line 195).

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[190]So, for example, Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, 72, Oldenburg, *Conflict*, 18, and Pope, *El*, 32–34.

[191]So, for example, O. Eissfeldt, *ʾEl im Ugaritischen Pantheon* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1951), 56; J. Gray, *The Legacy of Canaan. The Ras Shamra Texts and their Relevance to the Old Testament* (2d ed.; VTSup 5; Leiden: Brill, 1965), 158–159; P. D. Miller, "El the Warrior," *HTR* 60 (1967), 419–421.

[192]On *ḫtk*, see F. M. Cross, "The Canaanite Cuneiform Tablet from Taanach," *BASOR* 190 (1968), 45, n. 24.

[193]The reading is based on the reconstruction of H. L. Ginsberg, "Baʿl and ʿAnat," *Or* 7 (1938), 9. Compare Asherah's epithet *qnyt ilm*, "creatress of the gods."

[194]Note *Ibni-DINGER* and *Ilum-bani* in Old Akkadian (J. J. M. Roberts, *The Earliest Semitic Pantheon* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1972], 121, 124), and *yibnīyâ*, "Yahweh created," in 1 Chr 9:8.

One should also note the epithets used of El's children. I have mentioned above that the gods are called the *bn il*, literally "the children of El." They are also called *dr il*, "the generation of El." Kirta too is called a *bn il*, as well as *ġlm il*, "the lad of El," and *šph ltpn wqdš*, "the offspring of the Compassionate and Holy One," since he is the adopted son of his surrogate parent, El.

We thus see in El's character the locus of procreation in Semitic myth and legend. And we also find indications that El is the locus of procreation in Semitic cult and ritual. Both Kings Kirta and Dan'il, whether directly or indirectly, beseech El for progeny through rites of incubation, rites which involve ritual weeping[195] and, in the case of Dan'il, the offering of sacrifice. Dan'il's incubation in fact may even take place in a temple.[196] But whatever the location, El, having been ritually beseeched, responds, promising and ultimately providing sons to both monarchs. Thus in cult as well as myth, El is progenitor *par excellence*.

But as the progenitor *par excellence*, El has particular claim on all that comes from the womb. Children are sacrificed to El because they are his. He is their creator, their father, their patriarch. Because it was he who gave them life in the first place, he has every right to the life of these children, even if exercising this right means that his worshipers practice a cult of child sacrifice. Gruesome as it may seem to us, El's association with child sacrifice is integral to his nature.

Indeed, as the mythology of El makes clear, El sacrifices his own children. Sakkunyaton, as reported by Philo Byblius, thrice recounts the story of El's sacrifice of his own son. The most complete version of the incident reads (*PE* 1.10.44):[197]

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[195]See A. L. Oppenheim, *The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East, with a Translation of an Assyrian Dream-Book* (Transactions of the American Philosophical Society 46/3; Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1956), 200.

[196]See below, pp. 196–197 (Chapter 4).

[197]Trans. Attridge and Oden, *Philo of Byblos*, 63. See also *PE* 1.10.33, and compare *PE* 1.10.21.

> Among ancient peoples in critically dangerous situations it was customary for the rulers of a city or nation, rather than lose everything, to provide the dearest of their children as a propitiatory sacrifice to the avenging deities. The children thus given up were slaughtered according to a secret ritual. Now, Kronos, whom the Phoenicians call El, who was in their land . . . had an only son by a local bride named Anobret, and therefore they called him Ieoud . . . When war's gravest dangers gripped the land, Kronos dressed his son in royal attire, prepared an altar and sacrificed him.

This tradition is also alluded to by Diodorus Siculus[198] and by Augustine[199] and specifically cited by Tertullian, who writes:[200]

> Saturn did not spare his own children; so, where other people's were concerned, he naturally persisted in not sparing them; and their own parents offered them to him, were glad to respond.

El is, in short, in both myth and ritual a god of fertility who gives children and a god of child sacrifice who demands their return. That is, fertility and child sacrifice are traits interwoven in El's nature; fertility rites and the ritual of child sacrifice are rituals interwoven in El's cult. Just so are fertility rituals and rituals of child sacrifice intertwined in Isa 57:3–13. And there is more. El is also in both myth and ritual associated with the Canaanite cult of the dead, which is the third ritual to which there is allusion in Isaiah 57.

This association of El with the cult of the dead has become especially apparent since the publication of *Ugaritica* 5 in 1968. The first mythological text in that collection (RS 24.258) describes the heavenly *marzēaḥ* of the god El (*il yṯb bmrzḥ*). This heavenly *marzēaḥ* over which El presided undoubtedly has an earthly counterpart which dedicated itself to El as a patron. And, as analyzed above,[201] the purpose of these earthly *marzēaḥ* associations, when specified, is funerary. That El can be a head of one of these *marzēaḥ* banquets thus

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[198]Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* 20.14.7.

[199]Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 7.26.

[200]Tertullian, *Apologeticus* 9.4; trans. T. R. Glover, LCL, 47.

[201]Above, pp. 75–76 (Chapter 2).

suggests that in addition to his associations with fertility and child sacrifice, El has some relationship to the cult of the dead. This relationship is confirmed in a second mythological text from *Ugaritica* 5 (RS 24.252), in which El is given the title *Rāpi'u* (*rpu mlk 'lm*).[202] This epithet *Rāpi'u* should designate El as the patron or leader of the *rāpi'ūma* (biblical *rĕpā'îm*), the deified dead.[203] Again, El's connection with some cult of the dead is indicated.

We can now re-iterate Wellhausen's observations that Yahweh was in origin an El figure.[204] As previously described, both gods can be patrons of a cult of child sacrifice. But at the same time, both share attributes of creator, progenitor, and giver of children. Yahweh's very name likely means "he who creates,"[205] and the stories of Abraham in Genesis 15 (J) and Genesis 17 (P) well illustrate the deity's role as the giver of children. Also Yahweh, like El, can preside over a death-cult *marzēaḥ* banquet (at least Amos 6:4–7 and Jer 16:5–9 suggest such).[206] Moreover, as Lewis has shown, evidence indicates that an offerings cult for the dead was a part of the religion of at least some Iron Age Yahwists.

The implication to be drawn here is clear: as mythological and ritual language having to do with child sacrifice, fertility, and death can be intertwined in the cult of El, they can by extension be intertwined in the cult of Yahweh. Thus certain devotees of the god of Israel can interweave rituals of fertility, rites of child sacrifice, and a cult of the dead in their religious practice. Here, then, is a mythological and ritual basis for the organic unity which we have observed in Isa 57:3–13.

It is also possible to illuminate Isa 57:3–13 and its complex intertwining between fertility rituals, child sacrifice, and cults of the

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[202]There is some debate on whether this text actually describes El. I believe it does; see p. 133.

[203]On the *rāpi'ūma*, see above, p. 150.

[204]Above, p. 126.

[205]See the extensive discussion of F. M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 60–71.

[206]See above, pp. 77–78 (Chapter 2).

dead through an anthropological model. Let us begin here with the cult of the dead.

In the cult of the dead, as described above, it is necessary for the dead to have a proper burial and continuous offerings in the afterlife in order to ensure eternal rest and eternal happiness. Those responsible for providing these offerings are the dead's descendants, who give to their ancestors of the fruits reaped from the family land. But what guarantees that there will be enough produce to make adequate sacrifices to the dead? As we have also described, some ancient Israelites believed that the way to stimulate the production of crops and herds on the family land was through fertility rituals involving sacred sexual intercourse. That is, for those ancient Israelites fertility rituals are necessary if there is to be a proper observance of the cult of the dead. Such rituals ensure that the bounty needed to make the requisite offerings will be provided.

There is a second and more important point here. The dead as we have just described have a crucial interest in the fertility of the family land. But they also have an interest in the fertility of the family itself. It is, after all, the descendants of the ancestors who furnish appropriate funerary and memorial rites. Were a family line to come to an end, the deceased would no longer be provided for. Moreover, the resting place of the dead, the ancestral estate, would, were a family to die out, be lost to the family, leaving the deceased ancestors homeless.[207] Again, the continued fertility of the living is crucial. Without proper descendants, the deceased are abandoned. H. C. Brichto writes:[208]

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[207]Brichto, "Kin, Cult, Land, and Afterlife," *HUCA* 44 (1973), 1–54. In addition to Brichto, see also Stager, "Archaeology of the Family," *BASOR* 260 (1985), 23. Stager has discussed the communal or family tombs of Israel in light of Brichto's analysis. Stager points out that these family burials taking place over time and involving families for generations are consistent with Brichto's understanding of the inter-relationship between the living and the dead. The story of the death of Jacob (Genesis 50), in which Jacob's body was brought from Egypt to Canaan to be buried in the ancestral cave at Machpelah, is also instructive. See further Judg 8:32; 16:31; 2 Sam 2:32; 17:23; 19:38; 21:12–14.

[208]Brichto, "Kin, Cult, Land, and Afterlife," *HUCA* 44 (1973), 23.

> The condition of the dead in this afterlife is, in a vague but significant way, connected with proper burial upon the ancestral land and with the continuation on that land of the dead's proper progeny.

Of course, from the point of view of the living, fertility and progeny are also desirables. The living constantly carry with them the knowledge of their impending death. It is in their self-interest to reproduce and to preserve the family and its estate so that their afterlife will be a peaceful one. Again participation in a fertility cult is in the imagination of some ancient Israelites the way to stimulate the desired human fecundity. The result of this human fecundity: continuous maintenance of the cult of the dead.

We see here, then, a link between two of the cults of Isa 57:3–13, fertility rituals and cults of the dead. The key to this link is the ancestral estate: the fertility of the land and the fertility of those who hold it are essential for the proper observance of the cult of the dead. In addition, we find that the ancestral estate is pivotal when we turn to consider the relationship of fertility rituals and cults of the dead to the third cult in our poem, the cult of child sacrifice.

In the legal material in the books of Exodus and Numbers there are numerous laws concerning child sacrifice (Exod 13:1–2, 13, 15; 22:28; 34:19–20; Num 3:13; 8:17–18; 18:15). Notably in these laws child sacrifice is considered among laws concerning the "first fruits."[209] In these laws the Israelites are commanded to sacrifice to Yahweh their "first fruits," the first bounty of their harvest and the first born of their flocks. Children are likewise considered "first fruits"; that is, they are seen along with crops and animal herds as part of the bounty of the ancestral estate. What this suggests is that as some of the agricultural bounty produced on the ancestral estate must be sacrificed to the ancestors as part of the cult of the dead, so too must some of the human bounty, namely the children, be sacrificed. They are sacrificed to Yahweh, whom we should probably characterize here as the divine ancestor. The material discussed above[210] which describes Yahweh's

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[209]See also above, p. 119, n. 44.

[210]Above, p. 159.

Canaanite counterpart, El, as *Rāpiʾu*, the patron of the *rāpiʾūma/rĕpāʾîm*, the deified ancestors, is suggestive. And should we perhaps interpret the Pozo Moro reliefs,[211] which show a divine banquet at which a dead child is being served as the main course, as representing a death-cult *marzēaḥ* whose food is provided by the cult of child sacrifice?

At any rate, child sacrifice and the cult of the dead are linked. And there is more, for as we have now mentioned several times, some ancient Israelites relied on fertility rituals to stimulate human fecundity. Their goal: to produce the foodstuffs and the progeny needed to perform those sacrifices made to the human ancestors as part of the cult of the dead. But simultaneously, they sought to procure the human bounty required for those sacrifices made to the divine ancestor as part of the cult of child sacrifice. Here, then, rituals of fertility, a cult of child sacrifice, and rites pertaining to the cult of the dead are interwoven.

One final word play in Isa 57:3–13 suggests the correctness of this interpretation. The poem ends as follows:

> But whoever takes refuge in me will inherit the land,
> and will possess my holy mountain.

This half-verse is often deleted as a gloss, a pious addition to a poem of condemnation. But I think this is not the case. The key words here are *ynḥl ʾrṣ*, "he will inherit the land." The root *nḥl* is used in v 13 as a verbal form, "to inherit"; this verb, *naḥal*, is usually explained by the lexicons as denominative from *naḥălâ*, "possession, property, inheritance." What is important for us to note here is that *naḥălâ* is a technical term, meaning patrimony, the ancestral estate of each Israelite. A. Malamat defines it as:[212]

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[211]See above, p. 123, n. 61.

[212]A. Malamat, "Mari and the Bible: Some Patterns of Tribal Organization and Institutions," *JAOS* 82 (1972), 149. See also Stager, "Archaeology of the Family," *BASOR* 260 (1985), 22, and the bibliography listed there; P. D. Hanson, *The People Called. The Growth of Community in the Bible* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1986), 63–65; and H. O. Forshey, *The Hebrew*

> . . . an essentially unalienable piece of land possessed solely by a gentilic unit, whether large or small; hence, this land could not, at least in theory, be sold to any would-be purchaser, and its transfer from one owner to another could only be effected through inheritance.

It is, of course, precisely the preservation of the *naḥălâ*, the patrimony or ancestral estate, which we have found to be so crucial in ensuring the well-being of the dead. Surely, then, it is not coincidence that when we look back in Isa 57:3–13, to v 6, we find again the root *nḥl*,[213] meaning "wadi," and describing the wadi as the home of the perished, the dead. Indeed, we have previously noted that *naḥal* in Isa 57:3–13 has a secondary meaning, "tomb" or "graveyard."[214] The poet through paronomasia thus demonstrates precisely the point we made above: the crucial stake which the dead in the *naḥal* (v 6) have in the inheritance (*naḥălâ*) of the living (v 13). Children, too, we have noted, are part of the bounty of the *naḥălâ*. It is thus no accident, I would suggest, that our poet also describes the site where children are slaughtered in v 5 as the *nĕḥālîm*. Dead (*naḥal*), living (*naḥălâ*), and generations to come (*bannĕḥālîm*) are bound together in a complex whole.

Finally , what, according to v 13, will the living inherit? They will inherit the *ʾereṣ*, one last indication of the interaction between the living and the dead. The *ʾereṣ* is for the living the land of their ancestral heritage, Jerusalem, Judah, and Israel. For the dead, *ʾereṣ* is likewise this ancestral patrimony, but it is also the underworld. That their living descendants possess their *naḥălâ*, their *ʾereṣ*, guarantees for the dead eternal rest in the *ʾereṣ* of Sheol.

Root NḤL and its Semitic Cognates (unpublished Th.D. dissertation; Harvard Divinity School; Cambridge, MA; 1973), *passim*.

[213]While the root *nḥl*, "wadi," and *nḥl*, "to inherit," are in proto-Semitic etymologically distinguished (**nḥl*, "to inherit"; **nḫl*, "wadi"), word-play in biblical Hebrew, where the phonemes *ḥ* and *ḫ* have merged, is certainly possible.

[214]See above, pp. 142–143.

4. "A PEOPLE PROVOKING ME CONSTANTLY TO MY FACE" ISAIAH 65

Closely related to Isa 57:3–13 in both tone and content is the first stanza of Isaiah 65, Isa 65:1–7.[1] Both poems are bitter indictments of the religious practices of post-exilic Jerusalem, and each attacks the people for their participation in cults of the dead and fertility cults. Isa 65:1–7, however, does not merely repeat Isa 57:3–13, but rather the poet expands our vocabulary concerning alternative forms of sixth-century religious practices through his allusions to incubation rites, the eating of swine's flesh, and cultic rituals associated with the *bāmôt* sanctuaries. Speaking for God, he says:

(1) *ndršty*[2] *llw' š'lwny*[3] — I was ready to be consulted by those who asked not after me,

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[1]There are compelling reasons for regarding Isaiah 65 as a single poetic unit. The poem is bound together grammatically by the use of the first person, with God speaking directly to the people throughout. The poem is bound together thematically by the deity's contrasting of those who have been faithful and those who have sinned. This contrast is developed both in long stanzas (e. g., the righteous described in vv 8–10 are contrasted with the wicked condemned in vv 11–12) and in short sentences (e. g., v 13a: "Behold, my servants shall eat, but you shall hunger"). We are concerned here with the first of the long stanzas in which the wicked are described, vv 1–7.

Among commentators, there is practically unanimous agreement that vv 1–7 do constitute the first stanza of Isaiah 65. In Isa 63:7–64:11 the people speak in lament; the switch in speaker and theme at the start of Isaiah 65 signals v 1 as the beginning of a new poem. At the beginning of v 8 the disjunctive "thus says Yahweh," as well as the switch in focus from the wicked to the righteous, indicate the start of a new stanza within the larger composition.

[2]Although taken as true passives by the G, by Paul (Rom 10:20–21), and

	nmṣ'ty l' bqšny	I was ready to be found by those who sought me not.
	'mrty hnny hnny	I said, "Here I am! Here I am!"
	'l gwy l' qr'[4] *bšmy*	to a nation that did not call on my name.
(2)	*prśty ydy kl hywm*	I spread out my hands all day long
	'l 'm swrr wmwrh[5]	to a stubborn and rebellious people,
	hhlkym hdrk l' ṭwb	who walk a road that is no good,
	'ḥr mḥšbtyhm	after their own devices.
(3)	*h'm hmk'ysym 'wty*	A people provoking me
	'l pny tmyd	constantly to my face,
	hzbḥym[6] *bgnwt*	who sacrifice in gardens,
	wmqṭrym 'l hlbnym[7]	burning incense on incense altars;

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presumably by the Masoretes (based on their pointing of *qr'* in v 1b; see below, n. 4), *ndršty* and *nmṣ'ty* are rather to be interpreted as the Niphal *tolerativum*, used to express actions which the subject allows to happen to himself. See GKC, 51c.

[3]MT reads *ś'lw*. The emendation to *ś'lwny*, while logically desirable, is not grammatically necessary, since the suffix on *bqšny* can do double-duty. Still, the presence of the suffix on *ś'lw* is reflected in the G, OL, 1QIsa[a], Pesh, and Tg, which suggests that it is original to the Hebrew. The loss in the MT is probably due to haplography.

[4]MT points *qōrā'*, a Pual perfect. This passive pointing of *qr'* is the result of the Masoretic misunderstanding of *ndršty* and *nmṣ'ty* as passive forms (see above, n. 2). However, once it is recognized that *ndršty* and *nmṣ'ty* represent the tolerative use of the Niphal, it becomes clear that *qr'* should be read as active (following G, Vg, Tg, Pesh) and pointed either *qōrē'* or *qāra'*. The defective orthography of 1QIsa[a], *qr'*, suggests that the latter is to be preferred.

[5]MT reads *swrr*; 1QIsa[a] reads *mwrh*; G, Vg, and NT (Rom 10:20–21) conflate these two variants, reflecting *swrr wmwrh*. Parallel passages from the Hebrew Bible (Deut 21:18,20; Ps 78:8; Jer 5:23) suggest that the conflate reading is to be adopted here.

[6]The presence of the definite article on *hhlkym*, *hmk'ysym*, *hyšbym*, *h'klym*, and *h'mrym*, the five participles parallel to *zbḥym*, suggests that the definite article should also precede *zbḥym*. In 1QIsa[a] the *hmh* before *zwbḥym*, reflected in the G *autoi*, is best taken as an expansion of the article.

[7]The translation of *lbnym* as "incense altars," as well as the major variants preserved in the G and in 1QIsa[a], are discussed below, pp. 169–185.

(4)	*hyšbym bqbrym*	who sit in graves,
	wbnṣwrym ylynw	and spend the night in secret places;
	hᵓklym bśr hḥzyr	who eat the flesh of swine,
	wmrq[8] *pgwlym bklyhm*[9]	and polluted broth in their vessels;
(5)	*hᵓmrym qrb ᵓlyk*	who say, "Keep to yourself,
	ᵓl tgš[10] *by ky qdštyk*[11]	do not come near me, for I am too holy for you."
	ᵓlh ᶜšn bᵓpy	They are smoke in my nostrils,
	ᵓš yqdt kl hywm	a fire that burns all day long.

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[8]Reading *mrq* with the *Qereᵓ* and with 1QIsa[a], G, Vg, and Tg.

[9]Supplying the preposition *bĕ* on the basis of 1QIsa[a], Vg, and Tg.

[10]1QIsa[a] reads *tgᶜ* for MT *tgš*. The Qumrân reading agrees well with the context, but MT *ᵓl tgš* fits better with the parallel *qrb* and has the support of the versions.

[11]The form *qdštyk* was understood by the Masoretes as Qal plus pronominal suffix. It was suggested by A. Geiger in 1857 (*Urschrift und Uebersetzungen der Bibel in ihrer Abhängigkeit von der innern Entwickelung des Judenthums* [Breslau: Julius Hainauer, 1857], 56) that the verb should rather be pointed as a Piel; Geiger translates, "sonst weihe ich dich." Geiger has been followed by the majority of commentators, with the exception only of F. Delitzsch (*Biblical Commentary of the Prophecies of Isaiah* 2 [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1890], 441); A. Dillmann (*Der Prophet Jesaia* [Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament 5; Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1890], 528); C. C. Torrey (*The Second Isaiah. A New Interpretation* [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928], 468); and, most recently, J. A. Emerton ("Notes on the Text and Translation of Isaiah XXII 8–11 and LXV 5," *VT* 30 [1980], 446–450). Emerton has argued that the form is to be read Qal plus pronominal suffix, with the suffix equivalent to *lĕ* plus suffix, a well-known Hebrew idiom. Emerton translates, literally, "for I am holy to thee," that is, "for I am too sacred for you." "The speakers," Emerton writes, "believe themselves to be charged with holiness, and they warn other people not to touch them for fear of being harmed by the dangerous contagion." To interpret *qdštyk* as a Piel and translate, "lest I sanctify you," or the like, is disallowed, Emerton believes, because of tense; following A. Dillmann (*Der Prophet Jesaia*, 528), he suggests that such a translation requires the imperfect rather than the perfect tense. The distinction between perfect and imperfect tenses, however, does not generally hold in poetry. Still, I have retained the MT and translated it following Emerton's analysis. One notes, though, that in terms of meaning, the connotation of both Qal and Piel is the same.

(6)	*hnh ktwbh lpny*	Behold, it is written before me:
	lʾ ʾḥšh[12] *ky ʾm šlmty*	I will not keep silent, but I will repay
	[ ][13,14]	
(7)	*ʾšr qṭrw ʿl hhrym*	those who burned incense on the mountains,
	wʿl hgbʿwt ḥrpwny	and who scorned me on the hills.
	mdty pʿlṯm brʾšm[15]	I will measure their recompense upon their head,
	[*wšlmty*][16] *ʿl hyqm*	and I will repay unto their breast.

The similarities between Isa 57:3–13 and Isa 65:1–7 are so obvious that it is a pleasant surprise to find that issues which plagued us in our initial discussion of Isa 57:3–13, such as the date and audience of the poem, are not nearly so problematical in discussing Isa 65:1–7. Unlike Isa 57:3–13, Isa 65:1–7 is unanimously considered by commentators to be post-exilic. The setting of Isa 65:1–7 is Palestinian, suggesting a date after the return from exile, and the contrast developed in Isaiah 65 between the elect and the doomed describes well the division of the community into two factions in the early post-exilic period. The opening verse of Isaiah 66, a poem closely related to and in places (v 17; cf. v 3) dependent on Isaiah 65, implies that, at the time of the composition of that poem, the temple was in the process of being rebuilt. All these data would indicate a date between 535 and 520 for

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[12]*BHS* *ʾḥšh* is impossible; the verb must be *ʾḥšh* with other Hebrew manuscripts and with the versions.

[13]MT *wšlmty ʿl ḥyqm* is secondary here. Most likely, *ʿl ḥyqm* is supplied by anticipation of v 7b; this addition is reflected in the G *apodō eis ton kolpon autōn*. MT also adds a second *šlmty* due to dittography.

[14]MT *ʿwntykm wʿwnt ʾbwtykm yḥdw ʾmr yhwh* is taken, following P. D. Hanson (*The Dawn of Apocalyptic* [2d ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979], 141, n. h), as a clumsy prosaic gloss, as is indicated by the breakdown of prosodic structure and by the change from third-person to second-person forms.

[15]Reading *brʾšm* for MT *rʾšnh*.

[16]The textual confusion surrounding *wšlmty ʿl ḥyqm* in v 6b is echoed here in v 7b. Either the corruption in v 6 has caused the verb *wšlmty* to be lost in v 7, or the verb was lost by a haplography triggered by the *šin* and *mēm* of **rʾšm*.

Isa 65:1–7, contemporary with Isa 57:3–13.[17]

Equally as painless is the task of determining to whom Isa 65:1–7 is addressed. The poet uses in his condemnation the words *gôy* (v 1) and *ʿam* (vv 2, 3) to identify those who are under attack, and such terms indicate that the populace as a whole is being indicted. To be sure, the indictment cannot be all inclusive, for the deity, according to the poem, finds within the population a chosen group who will receive salvation: "I will not destroy them all" (v 8). But even within this partial exemption, the overall message rings clear: the entire nation is on trial for what the prophet considers cultic abuse. Let us thus turn to a description of these expressions of popular religion.

"Burning Incense on Bricks"

The text of Isa 65:3b has suffered badly in the history of textual transmission. The MT reads **hzbḥym bgnwt*, "who sacrifice in gardens," paralleled by *wmqṭrym ʿl hlbnym*, usually translated "burning incense on bricks." The G reflects the MT well, reading *autoi thysiazousin en tois kēpois*, "they are sacrificing in the gardens," parallel to *kai thymiōsin epi tais plinthois*, "burning incense on the bricks."[18] But a major divergence is found in the Qumrân tradition.

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[17]Similarly, K. Elliger, *Die Einheit des Tritojesaia* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1928), 99–104; J. Fischer, *Das Buch Isaias* 2 (Die Heilige Schrift des Alten Testamentes; Bonn: Peter Hanstein, 1939), 198–199; Hanson, *Dawn*, 143–146, 154; J. Muilenberg, "The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66: Introduction and Exegesis," *IB* 5 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1956), 745; C. Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66* (Old Testament Library; London: SCM, 1969), 404; R. N. Whybray, *Isaiah 40–66* (New Century Bible; London: Oliphants, 1975), 267; G. E. Wright, *The Book of Isaiah* (The Layman's Bible Commentary 11; Richmond, VA; John Knox, 1964), 156–159.

[18]The G then adds *tois daimoniois ha ouk estin*, "to demons who do not exist," for which there is no basis in the Hebrew. I. L. Seeligmann (*The Septuagint Version of Isaiah. A Discussion of its Problems* [Mededelingen en Verhandelingen 9; Leiden: Brill, 1948], 30–31) has pointed out that this reading is the result of inner-Greek corruption. The original G reading must have been *tois oikousin*, a literal rendering of Hebrew *hyšbym*, which occurs at the beginning of v 4 and now stands unreflected in the LXX. Through corruption, *tois oikousin* became *tois ouk ousin*; both readings are preserved in the Lucianic

1QIsa[a] reads *hmh zwbḥym bgnwt*, a slightly expansionistic rendering of the MT, paralleled by *wynqw ydym ʿl hʾbnym* for MT *wmqṭrym ʿl hlbnym*. Discussion of this significant Qumrân variant has focused on two issues: (1) the root and form of the verb *wynqw*, and (2) the meanings of *ydym* and *ʾbnym* in the context of Isa 65:1–7.

The verb *wynqw* can be analyzed either as a third-person plural perfect of *ynq*, "to suck,"[19] or as a third-person masculine plural imperfect, either with or without *wāw*-conversive, of *nqh*, "to pour or empty out."[20] Of these possibilities, it seems most probable that *wynqw* is an unconverted Qal imperfect of *nqh*. This reading is grammatically appealing, because the resulting sequence of participle, **hzbḥym*, followed by an unconverted imperfect, *wynqw*, would be exactly paralleled in the next colon of the poem, where we read *hyšbym* followed by *ylynw*. And, although the root *nqh* is attested in biblical Hebrew only in the Niphal, where it means "to be cleaned, purged, emptied out, to be innocent," and in the Piel, where it means, "to hold innocent, acquit, leave unpunished," it is clear that the Qal form could exist in Hebrew[21] and that it would mean "to empty out, pour out, clean out." In Akkadian *naqû* means "to pour or empty out," as a libation; in the Aramaic of Elephantine *nqyh* means "libation."[22] Biblical *mĕnaqqiyyâ*, "sacrificial bowl (for libations)" preserves this original

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tradition. Further corruption, generated by the original mistake, followed, finally yielding the paraphrastic and expansionistic *tois daimoniois ha ouk estin*.

[19]See A. Rubenstein, "Notes on the Use of the Tenses in the Variant Readings of the Isaiah Scroll," *VT* 3 (1953), 94, n. 3.

[20]As F. M. Cross (as reported by P. D. Hanson, *Dawn*, 141, n. e) has pointed out, it is impossible to read, as some do, an imperfect form of *ynq*, "to suck," as such a form should be written *wyynqw* in Qumrân orthography. See as representative of this typical Qumrân orthography for *ynq* 1QIsa[a] *tynqy* (Isa 60:16) and *tynqw* (Isa 66:11). Against Cross, see A. Rubenstein, "Notes on the Use of the Tenses," *VT* 3 (1953), 94, n. 3.

[21]In Jer 49:12 *nāqōh tinnāqeh*, Qal infinitive absolute plus Niphal imperfect, should surely be emended to *hinnāqēh tinnāqeh*.

[22]A. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1923), #72.15, 16.

meaning of *nqh*, "to empty out, to pour out," in Hebrew. Analysis of the meanings of *ydym* and *ʾbnym* in 1QIsa[a] 65:3bß will moreover demonstrate that the reading "they pour or empty out" for *wynqw* is to be preferred.

But *ydym* and *ʾbnym* have been the matter of much debate. Shortly after the publication of 1QIsa[a], J. Reider suggested that *ydym* and *ʾbnym* were obscene expressions, interpreting *yd* as "phallus" and *ʾbn* as "vagina."[23] This suggestion was accepted by M. Tsevat, who translated (ignoring the *-ym* ending on both nouns), "and empty (*nqh*) the penis into the vagina."[24] A similar interpretation of *ydym* was advanced independently by A. Rubenstein;[25] W. H. Brownlee[26] concurred with Rubenstein and further saw in *ʾbnym* some reference to genitalia, perhaps an allusion to "testicles." Both Rubenstein and Brownlee translated *wynqw* as "to suck" and interpreted the half-colon as a condemnation of some fertility ritual involving fellatio. M. H. Pope has, more recently, urged a similar understanding of 1QIsa[a] 65:3bß.[27]

This sexual interpretation of *ydym* and *ʾbnym* is not, however, without problems. Although it is clear that *yd* can mean "phallus" in Hebrew, as in Isa 57:8,[28] there is no solid evidence that *ʾbn* can have a sexual referent. Tsevat,[29] Brownlee,[30] and Pope[31] all suggest that *ʾbnym* has sexual connotations in Exod 1:16, *ʿal hāʾobnayim*, usually

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[23]J. Reider, "The Dead Sea Scrolls," *JQR* 41 (1950–51), 63–64, n. 7.

[24]M. Tsevat, "Some Biblical Notes," *HUCA* 24 (1953), 109–110.

[25]A. Rubenstein, "Notes on the Use of the Tenses," *VT* 3 (1953), 95.

[26]W. H. Brownlee, *The Meaning of the Qumrân Scrolls for the Bible* (New York: Oxford University, 1964), 234–235.

[27]M. H. Pope, *Song of Songs* (AB 7c; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1977), 225.

[28]See above, pp. 106–107, n. 14 (Chapter 3), and, for *yd*, "phallus," in Ugaritic, biblical Hebrew, and the Hebrew of Qumrân, M. Delcor, "Two Special Meanings of the Word *yd* in Biblical Hebrew," *JSS* 12 (1967), 234–240.

[29]Tsevat, "Some Biblical Notes," *HUCA* 24 (1953), 110.

[30]Brownlee, *Meaning*, 234–235.

[31]Pope, *Song*, 225.

translated "on the birthing stool." This suggestion is not in fact original to Tsevat, Brownlee, or Pope; Exodus Rabba 1, 14, interprets *hā'obnayim* as *mqwm šhwld nbnh bw*,[32] "the place where the child is built up," that is, the womb, and Targum Onkelos also interprets *hā'obnayim* as "womb," reading *mtbr'*, cognate to Hebrew *mašbēr*, "womb," as in Isa 37:3 (= 2 Kgs 19:3). A slightly different sexual interpretation of *hā'obnayim* is found in the Mekilta to Exod 15:5, where *'obnayim* is interpreted as "testes."[33] Still caution is advisable. The meaning of *hā'obnayim* in Exod 1:16 is far from clear, with most commentators retaining the traditional reading, "on the birthstool."[34]

More serious for those who expound a sexual interpretation of 1QIsa[a] 65:3bß are grammatical difficulties. It is not possible for *ydym* to mean "phalli" in 1QIsa[a], for the plural of *yād* is *yādôt*, not *yādîm*, in both biblical Hebrew and the Hebrew of Qumrân.[35] 1QIsa[a] *ydym* can thus only be a dual, *yādayim*. An allusion to either "sucking" or "pouring out" dual phalli obviously makes no sense. Thus F. M. Cross[36] has

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[32]The variant reading *mqwm šhwld npnh bw* reflects a scribal error, in which *p* is mistakenly read for *b*. See A. B. Ehrlich, *Randglossen zur hebräischen Bibel* 1 (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1908), 261, and A. Cohen, "Studies in Hebrew Lexicography," *AJSL* 40 (1923), 157, n. 1.

[33]A. Geiger (*Urschrift*, 393), A. B. Ehrlich (*Randglossen zur hebräischen Bibel* 1, 261), H. Torczyner (Tur-Sinai) ("Die Entstehung des semitischen Duals," *Die Entstehung des semitischen Sprachtypus* 1 [Wien: R. Löwit, 1916], 163–164), and A. Cohen ("Hebrew Lexicography," *AJSL* 40 [1923], 157–158) are among modern scholars who have followed the rabbis in urging a sexual interpretation for Exod 1:16. Readers of Dutch may also see H. A. Bongers, "Wat is de Betekenis van *'ābnayim* [sic] in Exodus 1:16?," *NedTTs* 20 (1966), 241–249, with a response by A. S. van der Woude, 249–252, and a further comment by Bongers, 252–254.

[34]See the comments of B. S. Childs, *Exodus* (Old Testament Library; London: SCM, 1974), 6; also see the *RSV* and *JPSV* translations.

[35]On the few places where *yād* does appear to be masculine in the Hebrew Bible, see GKC, 145p; for the gender of *yād* at Qumrân, see 1QM 1:14, 18:1 (both read *yd 'l hgdwlh*), and, for Isaiah, 1QIsa[a] 5:25; 9:11, 16, 20; 10:4; 14:27 (all read *ydyw (h)ntwyh*, as does MT).

[36]As reported by P. D. Hanson, *Dawn*, 141, n. e.

proposed that the dual *yādayim* refers to incense tongs, similar to the meaning of "incense spoon" for the singular *kap* (Exod 25:29; Num 7:14, 20, 86; 1 Kgs 7:50 [= 2 Chr 4:22]; 2 Kgs 25:14 [= Jer 52:18]; 2 Chr 24:14).[37] The more usual term for tongs, *melqāḥayim* (Isa 6:6; 1 Kgs 7:49 [= 2 Chr 4:21]), indicates that the use of the dual in referring to tongs is appropriate. With the verb *wynqw* interpreted as a third-person masculine imperfect, unconverted, of *nqh* (see above), the resultant translation is: "they empty incense tongs onto stones." The variant reading preserved in 1QIsa[a] thus condemns the people for the same sin as does MT *wmqṭrym ʿl hlbnym*: offering incense in a rite that is, according to the prophet, illicit and inappropriate.

But what is it that the prophet finds so illicit and inappropriate in the rite of offering incense? Certainly to offer incense is a legitimate part of the cult of Yahweh in the sixth century.[38] But incense offered to Yahweh is usually designated by the Hiphil of the root *qṭr*; only in a few cases does *hiqṭîr* refer to incense offered to gods other than

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[37]For brief notes on *kap*, "incense spoon," see W. F. Albright, "The Fourth Joint Campaign of Excavation at Tell Beit Mirsim," *BASOR* 47 (1932), 15–16; L. E. Toombs, "Incense, Dish for," *IDB* 2 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), 698b–699a; R. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel* 2. *Religious Institutions* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961), 431; and *HALAT* 2, s. v. *kap*, 468b. More complete discussions can be found in J. Kelso, *The Ceramic Vocabulary of the Old Testament* (BASOR Supplementary Series Nos. 5–6; New Haven: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1948), #47 (p. 22), and in G. E. Wright, "Solomon's Temple Resurrected," *BA* 4 (1941), 30 and Fig. 9, reprinted and revised in idem, *Biblical Archaeology* (2d ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), 143. Wright's brief comments on tongs should also be noted.

[38]That incense (*lĕbōnâ*) was used in the worship of Yahweh in the exilic and post-exilic cult has never been questioned. But many scholars in this century have followed J. Wellhausen (*Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* [Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black, 1885], 64–67) in claiming that the use of incense was not a part of the cult in the First Temple period. Against Wellhausen and his followers, see M. Haran, "The Use of Incense in the Ancient Israelite Ritual," *VT* 10 (1960), 113–129; K. Nielsen, *Incense in Ancient Israel* (VTSup 38; Leiden: Brill, 1986), 37–51, 101–107; and, less completely, R. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel* 2. *Religious Institutions*, 423, 430–432.

Yahweh (1 Kgs 11:8; Jer 48:35; Hos 2:15; 2 Chr 34:25).[39] Conversely, the Piel of *qṭr*, which is the form used in Isa 65:3bß, generally refers to incense burned to other gods or incense burned to Yahweh at the condemned *bāmôt*.[40] Only in one case does *qiṭṭēr* possibly refer to a sacrifice approved of by the biblical writers (1 Sam 2:16), and even there, textual confusion makes any conclusive interpretation impossible.[41] The use of the Piel in Isa 65:3bß, then, should indicate that the prophet is condemning the people for burning incense to another god and/or for burning incense at the *bāmôt* sanctuaries.[42] I would in fact suggest that both of these activities are being condemned in the poem.

Hints of a *bāmâ* sanctuary are particularly manifold, as we can see if we follow the image of incense as it recurs throughout the poem. Incense appears next in v 5, where Yahweh ends his recital of the acts which the people have done to provoke him by proclaiming, "they are smoke in my nostrils, a fire that burns all day long." The acrid smoke of

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[39]It is interesting to note that *hiqṭîr*, the verb of legitimate Yahwistic sacrifices, is used to refer to Jeroboam's sacrifices at the sanctuary at Bethel, which should further confirm the Yahwistic character of that shrine and its companion shrine at Dan. See further F. M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic. Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1973), 73–75.

[40]The distinction between the Piel and Hiphil of *qṭr* was pointed out long ago by J. Wellhausen (*Prolegomena*, 64, n. 2); see also Nielsen, *Incense*, 56. Whether this distinction between the two conjugations is primitive or a secondary specialization is not clear. The issue is not crucial for us, for surely in the late traditions reflected in Isa 65:1–7 the polarization has occurred.

[41]The text reads *qaṭṭēr yaqṭîrûn*, that is, Piel infinitive absolute plus Hiphil imperfect. Some emendation is obviously required. See the discussion of P. K. McCarter, *I Samuel* (AB 8; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980), 79.

[42]But compare Haran, "The Use of Incense," *VT* 10 (1960), 116–118, who offers a radically different analysis on the use and meaning of the root *qṭr*. Against Haran, see D. Edelman, "The Meaning of *Qiṭṭēr*," *VT* 35 (1985), 395–404, but note that Edelman's understanding of *qṭr* still differs from the more traditional analysis advocated here. Isa 65:3 is in fact a verse that gives Edelman pause, and her understanding of it (p. 395, n. 2) is not wholly satisfactory.

incense returns yet again, in v 7, where the people are a second time condemned for offering incense illegitimately, as is indicated by the use of the Piel, *qiṭṭēr*. But in v 7 the incense is offered on *hehārîm*, "the mountains," parallel to *haggĕbāʿôt*, "the hills." This is, I think, a reference to a mountain-top *bāmâ*.

Certainly it must be acknowledged that not all *bāmôt* in Israel were located on elevated sites.[43] The *bāmâ* at the Tophet in Jerusalem was in the valley of Hinnom (Jer 7:31; 19:5–6; 32:35), and Ezekiel attacks the *bāmôt* of the hills and valleys (Ezek 6:3). But in Israel the hills and the mountains were frequently the sites of the *bāmôt* (1 Kgs 11:7 [cf. 2 Kgs 23:13]; 1 Kgs 14:23; 2 Kgs 16:4; 17:9–10). Thus while the mention of a *bāmâ* may not necessarily indicate a location on a hill or mountain, the converse, a reference to a hill or mountain where cultic activities take place, certainly suggests a *bāmâ*.

The words following *qiṭṭēr* in Isa 65:3bß further indicate that the locus of 65:3bß and 65:7 is a *bāmâ* sanctuary. Yet immediately we confront difficulties, for what it means to burn incense *ʿal hallĕbēnîm*,

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[43]The precise definition of a *bāmâ* is in fact a matter of some debate. Recent analyses have demonstrated that the traditional understanding of a *bāmâ* as "an open-air sacred precinct situated atop a natural elevation or associated with a man-made elevation," which can have roofed cult buildings, but whose "basic accoutrements are altars, *maṣṣēbôt*, and sacred trees or the surrogate *ʾăšērîm*," is deficient. (The words are those of W. B. Barrick, "The Funerary Character of 'High-Places' in Ancient Palestine: A Reassessment," *VT* 25 [1975], 566; note that Barrick does not accept this traditional definition.) For example, it is clear that cultic buildings are associated with *bāmôt* far more frequently than usually recognized and thus to describe *bāmôt* as open-air sanctuaries is misleading. Indeed, W. B. Barrick ("What do we really know about 'high-places?'" *SEA* 45 [1980], 54) has written, "a *bāmāh* is something *within* which cultic acts were performed . . . an installation within which cultic furniture could be housed and used" (emphasis Barrick's). See also L. E. Stager and S. R. Wolff, "Production and Commerce in Temple Courtyards: An Olive Press in the Sacred Precinct at Tel Dan," *BASOR* 243 (1981), 99. Also note K.- D. Schunk, "*bāmāh*," *TDOT* 2 (ed. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren; Grand Rapids. MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1975), 139–145; P. H. Vaughan, *The Meaning of 'Bāmâ' in the Old Testament, A Study of Etymological, Textual, and Archaeological Evidence* (Society for Old Testament Study Monograph Series 3; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1974).

generally translated "on bricks," has been a matter of some debate. G. R. Driver,[44] for example, has suggested that it refers to a Babylonioan custom, citing ritual tablets from Babylon and Uruk which describe sacrificial rites undertaken when a temple is to be restored or reconstructed. These rites involve offerings made on the bricks of the new foundation of the temple, as well as offerings made to ^{d}*libittu*, the brick god. Our poet, according to Driver, is warning the people against imitating the Babylonian example and making such foundation sacrifices on bricks. This suggestion, it should be noted, is in the main a variant of an older theory of Babylonian provenance that viewed the "bricks" as brick altars, built under Mesopotamian influence and in violation of the Israelite laws prohibiting altars of dressed or hewn stone (Exod 20:24–26).[45]

But if the issue in Isa 65:3bß were foundation sacrifices similar to Driver's Babylonian temple-reconstruction offerings or if it were the use of brick altars, one would assume, given the date of our poem, that such rites would be a part of the temple-rebuilding project of the early post-exilic period. Yet nowhere else in Isaiah 65 is the temple even mentioned, and there is certainly no discussion of building activity on the temple mount.[46] This leads us to search for an alternative hypothesis, such as the one proposed by D. Conrad,[47] who, like Driver, builds on an earlier theory, this one advocating that the "bricks" refer to brick roof tiles, on which incense was burnt to the host of heaven, as in

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[44]G. R. Driver, "Isaianic Problems," *Festschrift für Wilhelm Eilers* (ed. G. Wiessner; Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1967), 56–57.

[45]So F. Delitzsch, *Prophecies of Isaiah*, 439–440, and J. Pedersen, *Israel, its Life and Culture* 3 (Copenhagen: Branner og Korch; London: Oxford University, 1940), 242, n. 2 ("brick altars were frequent; they were used in Israel at any rate for foreign cults, Isa. 65, 3"); more recently, W. Kessler, *Gott geht um das Ganze* (Die Botschaft des Alten Testaments 19; Stuttgart: Calwer, 1967), 86.

[46]Although this is certainly a concern elsewhere in Isaiah 56–66; see, e. g., Isa 66:1–2.

[47]D. Conrad, "Zu Jes 65 3b," *ZAW* 80 (1968), 232–234.

Jer 19:13 (cf. Jer 32:29; Zeph 1:5; 2 Kgs 23:12).[48] Conrad, realizing that only in late classical and Roman times were roofs made of tile or brick (Israelite roofs were flat, made of split logs or of a lattice of small poles and sealed with layers of clay),[49] describes instead a Babylonian ritual in which prayers to various deities (Adad, Marduk, Sin, Tašmetum, and Ištar) are offered by supplicants on the roofs of their houses; at the same time, burnt offerings are sacrificed to the deity in earthenware vessels (*niknakku*) or on bricks (*libittu*). Conrad identifies the deities beseeched in the Babylonian rite as the celestial deities, corresponding to the biblical "host of heaven" (Deut 4:19; 17:3; 2 Kgs 17:16; 21:3, 5 [= 2 Chr 33:3, 5]; 23:4–5; Jer 8:2; 19:13; Zeph 1:5). Thus like the theory he builds on, he connects Isa 65:3bß with the rites of rooftop worship described in pre-exilic materials.

Conrad also raises a third possibility:[50] that *hlbnym* could have an indigenous Syro-Palestinian referent. He notes as evidence the discovery of incense altars in the Levant, dating from the sixth to fourth centuries and similar to the Mesopotamian *niknakku*. However, although the appeal to an indigenous referent is obviously methodologically preferable, Conrad rejects it, arguing that the primary construction material of the Levantine incense altars is limestone and not earthenware or brick.

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[48]So T. K. Cheyne, *The Prophecies of Isaiah* 2 (London: C. Kegan Paul, 1881), 113.

[49]See L. E. Stager, "The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel," *BASOR* 260 (1985), 15–17.

[50]There is yet a fourth possibility: to emend. K. Marti (*Das Buch Jesaja* [Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1900], 401), for example, followed by K. Elliger (*Die Einheit des Tritojesaia*, 32) and H. Odeburg, (*Trito-Isaiah (Isaiah 56–66). A Literary and Linguistic Analysis* [Uppsala: A.-B. Lundequistska, 1931], 281), read *taḥat libnîm*, "under styrax trees," or the like for *ʿal hallĕbēnîm*, inspired both by the image of *gannôt*, "gardens," in the parallel colon and, more notably, by Hos 4:13, where the Israelites are condemned for burning incense "under evergreen oak, styrax tree, and terebinth" (*taḥat ʾallôn wĕlibneh wĕʾēlâ*). (On the translation of *libneh* as "styrax tree," see M. Zohary, *Plants of the Bible* [Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1982], 118.)

Conrad is indeed correct that the small, cuboid incense altars found in the west at Gezer,[51] Tell Jemmeh,[52] Tell el-Farʿâh (Tell Sharuhen),[53] Lachish,[54] and elsewhere,[55] dating from the sixth to fourth centuries, are made almost exclusively of limestone, not brick or clay.[56] But what Conrad fails to consider seriously is a suggestion originally made by M. Dahood that *hlbnym* in Isa 65:3bß has nothing to do with bricks, but means precisely "incense altars," a word related to Hebrew *lĕbōnâ*,

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[51]R. A. S. Macalister, *The Excavation of Gezer, 1902–5 and 1907–9* 2 (London: John Murray, 1912), 444–446. Although dated by Macalister to the Hellenistic period, the emended chronology for Gezer suggests a date of c. 550. See O. Tufnell, *Lachish* 3. *The Iron Age, Text* (London: Oxford University, 1953), 384.

[52]W. M. F. Petrie, *Gerar* (London: British School of Archaeology in Egypt, 1928), 18–19, and Pl. 40, 41. Petrie dated these altars to the seventh or sixth century; R. Amiran and G. W. van Beek ("Jemmeh, Tell," *Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* 2 [ed. M. Avi-Yonah; Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1976], 546–548) suggest a revised date in the sixth or fifth century. See also the comments of K. Galling, "Archäologischer Jahresbericht," *ZDPV* 52 (1929), 247–248.

[53]W. M. F. Petrie and O. Tufnell, *Beth-pelet* 2 (London: British School of Archaeology in Egypt, 1932), Pl. 88, 93. The date of these incense altars is sixth to fifth century, according to M. O'D. Shea, "The Small Cuboid Incense-Burner of the Ancient Near East," *Levant* 15 (1983), 85–86.

[54]O. Tufnell, *Lachish* 3, 383–384, Pl. 42, 68–71. Some one hundred and fifty limestone altars were found, which date, according to the excavator, from the sixth and fifth centuries.

[55]See the excellent survey article of Shea, "The Small Cuboid Incense-Burner," *Levant* 15 (1983), 84–88, and 100–103, and also J. B. Pritchard, "An Incense-burner from Tell es-Saʿidyeh, Jordan Valley," *Studies on the Ancient Palestinian World* (ed. J. W. Wevers and D. B. Redford; Toronto: University of Toronto, 1972), 10–14, and N. Glueck, "Incense Altars," *Translating and Understanding the Old Testament. Essays in Honor of Herbert Gordon May* (ed. H. T. Frank and W. L. Reed; Nashville: Abingdon, 1970), 325–329, 5 plates and 4 figures.

[56]See the catalogue in Shea, "The Small Cuboid Incense-Burner," *Levant* 15 (1983), 100–103.

"incense."[57] If Dahood is correct, then the material out of which the altar is constructed is of no concern. The sixth-, fifth-, and fourth-century limestone incense altars known to Syria-Palestine would be well described by the prophet's critique.

Dahood's major piece of evidence for translating *hlbnym* as "incense altars" is a Hebrew (or perhaps Idumaean) inscription written in lapidary Aramaic script found on a fifth-century limestone incense altar from Lachish.[58] The inscription was first published in 1953 by A. Dupont-Sommer[59] and has been the object of much discussion (W. F.

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[57]M. Dahood, "Textual Problems in Isaia," *CBQ* 22 (1960), 407. Note that Dahood does not accept his own proposal, preferring instead to read *hlbnym* as "bricks" and to see denounced in the verse some cult of Asherah. Dahood cites as evidence for such a claim a Tyrian coin dating from the reign of Gordian III (H. Hamburger, "A Hoard of Syrian Tetradrachms and Tyrian Bronze Coins from Gush Halav," *IEJ* 4 [1954], 201–226, #138). The coin shows Dido building Carthage, while the Phoenician inscription on the coin identifies Dido with the goddess of Tyre, Asherah (W. F. Albright, "Recent Books on Archaeology and Ancient History," *BASOR* 139 [1955], 25). The depiction of Dido-Asherah engaged in building activities at Carthage, coupled with *CTA* 4.4.61–62, *hn amt aṯrt tlbn lbnt*, which Dahood translates, following Albright, "Behold, the maid Asherah shall mold bricks," suggests to Dahood that the cult of Asherah involved some activity centering around bricks. Such a cult, he argues, is condemned in Isa 65:3bß.

This suggestion is extremely speculative and, I believe, improbable. Dahood's two pieces of evidence are separated in date by 1600 years; although we certainly must admit continuities between the religions of Ugarit and Phoenicia, one would prefer to see some intervening first-millennium evidence in support of Dahood's thesis. Moreover, neither of the two pieces of evidence Dahood cites is solid. Dido is pictured holding a rule and scepter, supervising the building of Carthage; the only association with "bricks" is the depiction of a mason as one of the workers. *CTA* 4.4.61–62 is a difficult text, and scholars have reached no consensus as to meaning.

[58]The language of the inscription, the character of the script, and the date are established by F. M. Cross, "Two Notes on Palestinian Inscriptions of the Persian Age," *BASOR* 193 (1969), 21–24.

[59]A. Dupont-Sommer, "Aramaic Inscription on an Altar," *Lachish* 3, 358–359.

Albright in 1953[60] and in 1974 [posthumously],[61] Dupont-Sommer again,[62] J. T. Milik,[63] Y. Aharoni,[64] F. M. Cross,[65] J. Naveh,[66] R. Degen,[67] and A. Lemaire).[68] The three-line inscription is only partly legible, as the ends of all three lines are broken off. In the *editio princeps* Dupont-Sommer read as follows:[69]

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[60]W. F. Albright, "Some Recent Publications," *BASOR* 132 (1953), 46–47.

[61]W. F. Albright, "The Lachish Cosmetic Burner and Esther 2:12," *A Light Unto My Path: Old Testament Studies in Honor of Jacob M. Myers* (ed. H. N. Bream, R. D. Heim, and C. A. Moore; Philadelphia: Temple University, 1974), 25–32. See also H. Shanks, "Albright the Beautician Reveals Secrets of Queen Esther's Cosmetic Aids," *BARev* 2/1 (March, 1976), 1, 5–6.

[62]A. Dupont-Sommer, "Les autels à encens de Lakish," *Annuaire de L'institut de Philologie et D'Histoire Orientales et Slaves* 13 (1953), 135–152.

[63]J. T. Milik, "Nouvelles inscriptions Sémitiques et Greques du pays de Moab," *Studii Biblici Franciscani Liber Annuus* 9 (1959), 334, n. 4.

[64]Y. Aharoni, "Trial Excavation in the 'Solar Shrine' at Lachish. Preliminary Report," *IEJ* 18 (1968), 163–164; idem, "Excavations in the 'Solar Temple' at Lachish," *Qadmoniot* 2 (1969), 131–134 (Hebrew); idem, "The Incense Altar from Lachish," *Leš* 35 (1970), 3–6 (Hebrew).

[65]Cross, "Notes on Palestinian Inscriptions," *BASOR* 193 (1969), 21–24.

[66]J. Naveh, *The Development of the Aramaic Script* (Jerusalem: Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities 5/1, 1970), 55; idem, "Hebrew Texts in Aramaic Script in the Persian Period?" *BASOR* 203 (1971), 29, 32.

[67]R. Degen, "Der Räucheraltar aus Lachish," *Neue Ephemeris für semitische Epigraphik* 1 (1972), 39–48.

[68]A Lemaire, "Un nouveau roi arabe de Qedar dans l'inscription de l'autel à encens de Lakish," *RB* 81 (1974), 63–72.

[69]A. Dupont-Sommer, "Aramaic Inscription," *Lachish* 3, 358–359. Dupont-Sommer's original interpretation was followed almost totally by Y. Aharoni ("Solar Shrine," *IEJ* 18 [1968], 163). Aharoni did protest that Dupont-Sommer's reconstruction of line 3 was too long (see below, n. 72); he proposed instead *lyh mr*[*nn*], "to Yahweh, our Lord."

lbnt[3] *y*[ ]	L'encens J[oa]
š bn mḥ[ ]	š(?) fils de Meḥ[ir](?)
lyh mr[3] [*šmy*[3]]	à Yah, maître [du ciel].

Writing in 1953, Albright objected on interpretive, grammatical, and epigraphic grounds, claiming, respectively, (1) that Dupont-Sommer's "sensational implication of a pagan cult of Yahweh on the very soil of Judah after the time of Ezra"[70] was difficult to accept, (2) that Dupont-Sommer's interpretation of the inscription was syntactically unsatisfying, lacking a verbal element, and (3) that Dupont-Sommer had misread certain letters, in particular, the *ḥ* of line 2 and the *m* and *r* of line 3.[71]

In the light of our thesis that in the sixth century the forms of religious expression among the populace were somewhat broader than the biblical writers cared to sanction, Albright's first objection is not compelling; although the Lachish incense altar post-dates our texts by approximately one hundred years, I have no difficulty imagining a cult centered in Lachish which perceived the burning of incense to Yahweh on small altars as legitimate, regardless of whatever practices the priests and prophets in the sixth century and Ezra in the fifth century had defined as normative. Albright's second objection, conversely, is, I think, sound: the lack of syntactical sense in Dupont-Sommer's translation is bothersome.[72] As for Albright's third objection, Cross established in 1969 that Dupont-Sommer misread only the *r* of line 3.[73]

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[70]W. F. Albright, "Recent Publications," *BASOR* 132 (1953), 47. Note that Albright dated the altar to the late fifth or fourth century.

[71]W. F. Albright, "Recent Publications," *BASOR* 132 (1953), 47.

[72]Dupont-Sommer, in an effort to overcome the grammatical difficulties of his initial interpretation, suggests (in "Les autels à encens," *Annuaire de L'institut de Philologie et D'Histoire Orientales et Slaves* 13 [1953], 143) reading line 3 as *lyh mr*[*'h qrb*], translating the whole as "L'encens J[oa]š (?) fils de Meḥ[ir] (?) à Yah [son] seigneur [a offert]." However, this reconstruction for line 3, like Dupont-Sommer's original reconstruction, is surely too long. See further Cross, "Notes on Palestinian Inscriptions," *BASOR* 193 (1969), 21.

[73]Cross, "Notes on Palestinian Inscriptions," *BASOR* 193 (1969), 21. Albright ("The Lachish Cosmetic Burner," *A Light Unto My Path*, 27)

Albright proposed:[74]

*lbnt*ᵓ *y*[ᵓ]	O Incense! Let Yaᵓosh (?)
š bn mz[*r*]	son of Mazzer (?)
lyh[*w* (?)] [*z*]*k*ᵓ]	be absolved from guilt!

The third line was explained by Albright on the basis of the Targum of Gen 24:8, *ûtĕhê zâkâ mim-mômāṯî dâ*, "thou shalt be absolved from this oath of mine." But this is unconvincing. Moreover, Albright's overall reconstruction, like Dupont-Sommer's, is hardly syntactically plausible.[75] Finally, the vocative appeal to incense, on which Albright failed to comment, is, to the best of my knowledge, without parallel.[76]

J. T. Milik, attempting to overcome the interpretive and grammatical difficulties which plagued Albright and Dupont-Sommer,[77] suggested reading the first word of the inscription as a North Arabic (Idumaean) construct rather than an Aramaic emphatic form, yielding, according to Milik, the reading *lbnt ʾyš bn mḥly*.[78] Although Milik failed to read the third line of the text, his interpretation of the first two lines of the inscription, by far the most syntactically satisfying reading, seems secure. Milik translates, "L' (autel à) encens de PN . . . ," reading *lbnt*, cognate with Hebrew *lĕbōnâ*, "incense," but supplying "incense altar" for sense. Similarly, F. M. Cross, who goes beyond Milik in solving the third line of the inscription, reads:[79]

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subsequently accepted Cross' reading.

[74]W. F. Albright, "Recent Publications," *BASOR* 132 (1953), 47.

[75]See Cross, "Notes on Palestinian Inscriptions," *BASOR* 193 (1969), 22.

[76]For a more thorough critique of Albright, see Dupont-Sommer, "Les autels à encens," *Annuaire de L'institut de Philologie et D'Histoire Orientales et Slaves* 13 (1953), 144–149.

[77]Milik termed Dupont-Sommer's and Albright's work, "les essais d'interprétation peu satisfaisants." See Milik, "Nouvelles inscriptions Sémitiques," *Studii Biblici Franciscani Liber Annuus* 9 (1959), 334, n. 4.

[78]Milik, "Nouvelles inscriptions Sémitiques," *Studii Biblici Franciscani Liber Annuus* 9 (1959), 334, n. 4.

[79]Cross, "Notes on Palestinian Inscriptions," *BASOR* 193 (1969), 23. Albright, in 1974 ("The Lachish Cosmetic Burner," *A Light Unto My Path*, 26–

lbnt ʾy	The incense (altar) of ʾIy-
š bn mḥ	yoš son of Maḥ-
ly hmlʾ[k]	li, the courie[r].

M. Dahood[80] in 1960 accepted Milik's interpretation, but suggested that *lĕbōnâ* can mean both "incense" and "incense altar," that is, that Milik's parentheses around *autel à* should be removed. Dahood compared the Palmyrene incense altar described as *ḥmnʾ*, "incense altar";[81] similarly at Lachish, Dahood suggested, the word *lbnt* identifies the object on which it is inscribed as an incense altar. It is *lĕbōnâ*, "incense altar," which then informed Dahood's interpretation of *hlbnym* as "incense altars" in Isa 65:3bß.[82]

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28), accepted Cross' reading, but translated: "Belonging to the daughters of ʾIyyoš, son of Maḥli the courier." Albright interpreted the inscribed object as a cosmetic or spice burner, not an incense altar. Certainly, our altar could be such, since the kind of stands used to burn incense in the cult, to burn spices in the home, or to burn cosmetics for women would be identical. Thus it is impossible for us to distinguish what our stand's purpose was, and we must concede that Albright's reading and interpretation is equally as likely as the one favored here. And obviously, if the Albright suggestion were preferred, the parallel with Isa 65:3bß would be destroyed.

[80]M. Dahood, "Textual Problems," *CBQ* 22 (1960), 407.

[81]See H. Ingholt, "Le sens du mot *Ḥammān*," *Mélanges Syriens offerts à Monsieur René Dussaud* 2 (Paris: Libraire orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1939), 795–802.

[82]Concerning the problem of how the feminine form *lĕbōnâ* can have a plural which takes a masculine ending, Dahood, wishing to preserve the consonantal text, proposed that heteroclitic nouns such as *ʾăšērâ/ʾăšērîm* be compared to *lbnh/lbnym*. That the heteroclitic noun *ʾăšērâ/ʾăšērîm* refers to a cultic phenomenon as does *lbnh/lbnym* is deemed especially noteworthy (Dahood, "Textual Problems," *CBQ* 22 [1960], 407). Alternatively, we could reconcile the feminine *lĕbōnâ* with the masculine *lbnym* by emending MT *lbnym* to *lbnwt*.

Dahood does not comment on the vocalization of *lbnym*, but we must assume that if *lbnym* in Isa 65:3bß is the plural of Hebrew *lĕbōnâ*, "incense," then the Masoretic pointing of *lĕbēnîm* is wrong, generated by a mistaken understanding of *lbnym* as "bricks." Accordingly, we must repoint to *lĕbōnîm*.

Opponents of Dahood's proposal may further note that it is possible to have

The practice denounced in Isa 65:3bß, then, is burning incense in what the prophet considers an illegitimate fashion (as indicated by the use of the Piel *qiṭṭēr*) on incense altars. The altars described as *lbnym* in Isa 65:3bß are probably best pictured as the small, cuboid incense altars made of limestone, known from the sixth through the fourth century throughout the west Semitic world. It is, after all, this type of limestone incense altar that is labelled a *lĕbōnâ* at Lachish. The variant reading *hʾbnym* found in 1QIsa[a] and reflected in the Peshitta is easily explained as describing the same type of limestone incense altar.

Above, I argued that the setting of Isa 65:3bß and 65:7 was the *bāmôt* sanctuaries of Israel. It is noteworthy for this thesis that one of the characteristic furnishings of the sacred *bāmôt*, according to biblical descriptions, is an incense altar (*ḥammān*).[83] Lev 26:30 recounts the threatening words of God (cf. 2 Chr 14:4; 34:3–4, 7; Ezek 6:4, 6):

> I will destroy your *bāmôt*, and cut down your incense altars,
> and put your corpses on the corpses of your idols.

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incense altars inscribed with the root *lbn* meaning "incense" alone; Dupont-Sommer and Albright both cite in their discussions of the Lachish altar South Arabian incense altars on which *lbny*, "incense, frankincense" is engraved as one member of a list of various perfumes (see G. Ryckmans, "Inscriptions Sud-Arabes," *Le Muséon* 48 [1935], 176–177 [Nos. 136–138], and A. Jamme, "Deux autels à encens de l'Université de Harvard," *BO* 10 [1953], 94–95). But such inscriptions' similarity to the Lachish altar inscription is superficial, for the South Arabic inscriptions characteristically have the names of different fragrances inscribed on all four sides of the altar. This is certainly not the type of inscription we find at Lachish. Far more germane, and certainly closer in provenance, is the Palmyrene altar described as *ḥmnʾ* (for general comments on the differences between the South Arabian incense altars and the Palestinian material, see Pritchard, "An Incense Burner from Tell es-Saʿidyeh," *Studies on the Ancient Palestinian World*, 14).

[83]On the cult furnishings of the *bāmôt*, see R. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel* 2. *Religious Institutions*, 286–287, and K.- D. Schunk, "*bāmāh*," *TDOT* 2, 143; but cf. M. Haran, "Temples and Cultic Open Areas as Reflected in the Bible," *Temples and High Places in Biblical Times* (ed. A. Biran; Jerusalem: Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, 1981), 31–37. On the translation of *ḥammān*, see Ingholt, "Le sens du mot *ḥammān*," *Mélanges Syriens*, 795–802.

Similarly, although no altar is mentioned, incense offerings are associated with the *bāmôt* in 1 Kgs 3:3; 13:2; 22:44; 2 Kgs 12:4; 14:4; 15:4, 35; 16:4; 17:11; 23:5, 8; 2 Chr 28:4, 25 (cf. 1 Kgs 11:7–8; Jer 48:35; Ezek 20:28–29; 2 Chr 28:25).[84] Our translation of *hlbnym* as "incense altars" is thus perfectly appropriate within the context of Isa 65:1–7, for the *bāmôt* at which we have located vv 3bß and 7 require such altars as part of their cult apparatus.

The incense offered at these *bāmôt* sanctuaries was burned, in all likelihood, to Yahweh. Certainly in an earlier period of Israel's history, *bāmôt* sanctuaries were considered legitimate sites of Yahwistic worship. Samuel participated in a sacrificial meal at the *bāmâ* of his hometown, taking the anointed one of God, Saul, with him (1 Sam 9:11–26). Solomon sacrificed and received a vision from Yahweh at Gibeon, described in the text as "the great *bāmâ*," *habbāmâ haggĕdôlâ*. The *bāmôt* are similarly regarded as shrines of Yahwistic worship in 2 Kgs 17:2, where Aramaic peoples who "feared Yahweh" appointed priests to serve him at the *bāmôt*. Even Josiah considered the *bāmôt* to be Yahwistic, for when he destroyed the *bāmôt*, he invited those who had officiated there to come and serve with their brethren at Yahweh's temple in Jerusalem (2 Kgs 23:8–9).[85]

I also suggested above, however, that the use of *qiṭṭēr* in Isa 65:3bß indicated not only incense offered at the *bāmôt* sanctuaries, incense that was dedicated, as we have now seen, to Yahweh, but in addition incense offered to a god other than Yahweh. This can be seen if we examine the parallel to "burning incense on incense altars" in Isa 65:3bα , "sacrificing in gardens." To anticipate somewhat, we will see that this is a reference to the cult of Asherah. She is worshiped alongside Yahweh on the *bāmôt*, in all likelihood as his consort. Thus

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[84]One might note also that archaeological evidence from LB II and LB III may attest to the association of incense altars with *bāmôt*. At Area F, at Hazor, allegedly the site of a *bāmâ*, many clay incense stands were found. See M. Ottosson, *Temples and Cult Places in Palestine* (Boreas 12; Uppsala: [Universitet], 1980), 94–96.

[85]See R. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel* 2. *Religious Institutions*, 337.

she receives along with him the incense and sacrifices their worshipers offer.

But like *wmqṭrym ʿl hlbnym* in 65:3bß, the allusion to *gannôt* in Isa 65:3bα is at first glance obscure, for gardens are not commonly named as sites of condemned behavior in the Hebrew Bible. In fact gardens are explicitly mentioned in "idolatrous" contexts only three times: here in Isa 65:3, in a closely related and probably dependent verse, Isa 66:17, and in Isa 1:29.[86] Still, in the third of these we read:

> For you will be ashamed[87] of the terebinths (*ʾēlîm*)
> in which you pleasured,
> You will blush at the gardens (*gannôt*) that you chose.

The parallel is what is of note here: First Isaiah (Isaiah of Jerusalem) explains the rituals that take place in gardens by reference to rites practiced under sacred trees. This suggests that the enigmatic reference to cultic gardens in Isa 65:3bα can likewise be explained by examining

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[86]This paucity of data on gardens and illicit worship led H. Ewald (*Commentary on the Prophets of the Old Testament* 4 [Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1880], 347), in 1880, to propose emending *gannôt* to *gaggôt*, "roofs"; the parallel *hallĕbēnîm*, in this interpretation, is taken to mean "rooftiles." The act condemned is thus sacrificing and burning incense to the host of heaven on the tops of roofs. But as argued above, it is improbable that the term *lbnym* has anything to do with roofs or rooftiles, which diminishes any appeal Ewald's emendation might hold.

Equally unappealing, I think, is G. R. Driver's attempt ("Isaianic Problems," *Festschrift Eilers*, 56) to see an Assyrian or Babylonian rite standing behind the condemnation of "sacrificing in gardens" in Isa 65:3bα. Driver adduces as his only evidence a letter written, apparently, to Ashurbanipal in the mid-seventh century describing a rite in which a god's statue is taken from the temple to the garden, where a sacrifice is offered to the idol. Driver's evidence itself is vague and without parallel. More important, Isa 1:29, with which Isa 65:3bα and Isa 66:17 must, I think, be connected, dates from the very beginning of Israel's Assyrian period. It is difficult, if not impossible, to posit that the garden rite condemned by Isaiah of Jerusalem (First Isaiah) was of Assyrian provenance. It is far more satisfying to see in Isa 1:29 a condemnation of a native Israelite cult, a cult which is condemned anew by the post-exilic Isaianic school.

[87]Reading *tbšw* for MT *ybšw*.

the cult acts associated with sacred groves. And, while gardens are rarely depicted as sites of condemned behavior in the Hebrew Bible, the biblical writers frequently castigate cultic activities practiced under sacred trees.[88]

There is some comparative data from the ancient Near East on the existence of sacred trees and groves. Jdt 3:8 recounts that Holofernes, the general of Nebuchadnezzar, destroyed "shrines"[89] and "sacred groves" in the seacoast cities of Sidon, Tyre, Jamnia, Ashdod, and Ashkelon. Indeed, L. E. Stager has found sacred tree pits at Ashkelon, dating, however, from the Islamic period.[90] At Kition V. Karageorghis has excavated a sacred area dating from the Late Bronze Age. There he found a temple built with ashlar-block masonry which had in its courtyard evidence of about sixty tree pits, the remains of a sacred grove.[91] The ashlar-block masonry of the temple indicates Canaanite influence, which suggests that the sacred grove is to be considered Canaanite as well.

This comparative data, however, fails to reveal the nature of the ritual activities practiced in sacred groves. For this we turn to the Bible. In Isa 1:29 the word *ḥmd* used to describe the activities that go under the terebinths carries connotations of sexual heat or lust. This is no anomaly. The biblical writers typically describe the ritual activities that

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[88]The stereotypical phrase used in the Bible to describe the cult associated with sacred trees is "under every green tree" (*taḥat kol ʿēṣ raʿănān*). This phrase occurs some eleven times in the Hebrew Bible: Deut 12:2; 1 Kgs 14:23; 2 Kgs 16:4 (= 2 Chr 28:4); 2 Kgs 17:10; Isa 57:5; Jer 2:20; Jer 3:6, 13; Jer 17:2; and Ezek 6:13. Related passages which discuss cults associated with sacred trees include Hos 4:12–13; Isa 1:29–30; Ezek 20:28; and, possibly, the textually difficult Isa 6:13. (On Isa 6:13 see S. Iwry, "*Maṣṣēbāh* and *Bāmāh* in 1Q Isaiah[a] 6 13," *JBL* 76 [1957], 225–232; also W. F. Albright, "The High Place in Ancient Palestine," VTSup 4 [1956], 254–255.)

[89]Reading "shrines" with the Syriac; G *horia*, "boundaries."

[90]L. E. Stager, private communication.

[91]See V. Karageorghis, *Kition, Mycenaean and Phoenician Discoveries in Cyprus* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976), 57; idem, *Cyprus, from the Stone Age to the Romans* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1982), 69, 94, and Fig. 72 (p. 95).

take place under sacred trees as sexual in nature. The earliest such description is found in Hos 4:12–13:

> My people inquire of their wooden object,
> their staff gives oracles to them.
> For a spirit of harlotry led (them) to err,
> they have played the harlot
> instead of being subject to their God.
> On the tops of mountains they sacrifice,
> on the hills they burn incense,
> Under evergreen oak, styrax tree, and terebinth,
> for their shade is good.[92]
> Therefore your daughters play the harlot,
> your brides commit adultery.

Similar sexual imagery is used by Jeremiah (Jer 2:20; 3:6, 13), who, like Hosea, draws upon the image of the harlot to depict what goes on "under every green tree." And, as we have seen, the author(s) of Isaiah 56–66 describe(s) the activities which go under sacred trees as sexual lust or desire (Isa 57:5). It is of particular note that these trees are described as "terebinths" (*'ēlîm*), the same word that is parallel to *gannôt* in Isa 1:29. This should confirm that the condemned gardens of Isa 65:3bα are the sacred trees known elsewhere in the Bible.

These prophetic condemnations of harlotry "under every green tree" are undoubtedly to some degree polemical, but they do suggest, as has long been recognized, the presence of fertility rituals which took place in sacred groves in ancient Israel. One deity particularly associated with these fertility rituals which took place in sacred groves was Asherah,

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[92]Note M. Zohary's description (*Plants of the Bible*, 33) of the trees of the forests of the Sharon, Lower Galilee, and the valleys of Huldah and Dan. In these forests, according to Zohary, evergreen oaks, styrax trees, and terebinths predominate. These are, of course, precisely the trees mentioned in Hos 4:13. Moreover, it is interesting to note that all these trees are deciduous; thus the season Hosea describes here is the summer, when the trees are leafed out. The summer, of course, is the dry season in Israel, and it is easy to understand why fertility rituals involving sexual intercourse would be practiced during that season, when the forces of drought and sterility threatened the fruitfulness of the land.

the great Canaanite mother goddess (typically worshiped through her cult object, the *ʾăšērâ* or *ʾăšērîm*). In 2 Kgs 17:10, for example, we read:

> They set up for themselves *maṣṣēbôt* and *ʾăšērîm* on every high hill and under every green tree.

Similarly, Jeremiah, in Jer 17:2, writes of the Judeans (see also 1 Kgs 14:23; Deut 12:2–3; and possibly Isa 6:13):

> Their children remember their altars and their *ʾăšērîm*, beside every green tree, and on the high hills, and on the mountains of the open country.

It is not at all surprising to find Asherah worshiped in sacred groves, for in the ancient Near East the goddess Asherah is frequently associated with sacred trees. The biblical tradition is quite emphatic in this identification. Most explicit is Deut 16:21:

> You shall not plant (*nāṭaʿ*) for yourself as an *ʾăšērâ* any tree beside the altar of Yahweh, your God.

Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible the cultic symbol of the *ʾăšērâ* is surely to be understood as a stylized wooden tree. The cult object is made (*ʿāsâ*) or built (*bānâ*), stood up (*ʿāmad*), planted (*nāṭaʿ*), or erected (*hiṣṣîb*). If destroyed, the cult symbol is burned (*bʿr* or *śārap*), cut down (*kārat*), hewn down (*gādaʿ*), uprooted (*nātaš*), overturned (*nātaṣ*), or broken (*šibbēr*).[93]

The versions, too, understand *ʾăšērâ* as meaning "tree"; in Greek *ʾăšērâ* is translated most commonly by *alsos*, "grove, sacred grove," and twice by *dendra*, "trees" (Isa 17:8 and Isa 27:9).[94] The Latin,

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[93]For a complete survey of the verbs used with *ʾăšērâ* in the Hebrew Bible, see W. L. Reed, *The Asherah in the Old Testament* (Fort Worth, Texas: Texas Christian University, 1949), 29–37, although I disagree with Reed's conclusion that the *ʾăšērâ* is not a stylized tree, but rather a wooden image of the goddess.

[94]Twice (2 Chr 15:16 and 2 Chr 24:18) the G reads Astarte (*Astarte, Astartais*) due to textual confusion.

similarly, reads *lucus*, "grove," or *nemus*, "wood, grove," for *ʾăšērâ*.[95] An epithet of Asherah, known both from Ugaritic and from Phoenician material, is *ʾēlat*, "goddess," the feminine form of *ʾēl*, "god." The term *ʾēlat* as an epithet for the goddess Asherah does not occur in the Hebrew Bible except in the place name Elat, but the word *ʾēlâ* (< **ʾēlat*) is known in biblical Hebrew as the word for terebinth:[96] terebinths are frequently mentioned in conjunction with the fertility cult practiced under sacred trees (Hos 4:12–13; Isa 1:29; Isa 6:13; Isa 57:5; and Ezek 6:13). This should further confirm the association of the goddess Asherah with sacred trees. Finally, we might note Genesis 2–3, for it has been suggested that the character of Eve in that story mimics in some respects the goddess Asherah.[97] If so, then the role of the tree of life/tree of knowledge in that story is significant.

The glyptic evidence associating Asherah with sacred trees is intriguing. A tenth-century cult stand from Taanach is made of terracotta and stands approximately sixty centimeters high.[98] The stand has four registers; on its bottom register is depicted a nude female standing between two lions. Her outstretched arms grasp the lions' heads. The

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[95]Once (Jud 3:7) the Latin reads *Astaroth* due to textual confusion.

[96]For this etymology, see W. F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan. A Historical Analysis of Two Contrasting Faiths* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1968), 189; R. A. Oden, *Studies in Lucian's De Syria Dea* (HSM 15; Missoula, MT: Scholars, 1977), 154.

[97]See H. N. Wallace, *The Eden Narrative* (HSM 32; Atlanta, GA: Scholars, 1985), 111–114, 158.

[98]For photographs and discussion of the stand, see P. W. Lapp, "The 1968 Excavations at Tell Taʿannek," *BASOR* 195 (1969), 42–44; A. E. Glock, "Taanach," *Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* 4 (ed. M. Avi-Yonah and E. Stern; Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1978), 1142, 1147; idem, "Taanach," *IDBSup* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976), 856a, b; A. Reichert, "Kultgeräte," *Biblisches Reallexicon* (2d ed.; ed. K. Galling; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1977), 191a, b; L. F. DeVries, "Cult Stands—A Bewildering Variety of Shapes and Sizes," *BARev* 13/4 (July/August, 1987), 32–33; R. Hestrin, "The Cult Stand from Taʿanach and its Religious Background," *Studia Phoenicia* 5. *Phoenicia and the East Mediterranean in the First Millennium B.C.* (ed. E. Lipiński; Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 23; Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1987), 61–77.

female is surely to be taken as the goddess Asherah, who is known as "the Lion Lady," *labi't(u)*, in the mythology of the west Semitic world.[99] Egyptian representations of Qudšu, who is to be identified with Asherah (*qdš* is an epithet of Asherah at Ugarit), frequently show the goddess standing astride a lion.[100] At Ugarit the children of Asherah are called her "pride of lions" (*ṣbrt ary*; *CTA* 3.5.45; 4.1.9; 4.2.25–26).[101] The depictions of lions and the naked goddess on the bottom register of the Taanach cult stand indicate, in short, a cult object permeated with the imagery of Asherah. Thus when we look elsewhere on the cult stand, on the third register from the bottom, it is significant that we find pictured there a sacred tree. Moreover, the tree in the third register is flanked by two lions identical to those in the bottom register. We thus have in that third register, I would suggest, two major symbols of Asherah: the lion and the sacred tree.[102]

We should also note that Asherah's epithets well demonstrate that she is a fertility goddess. At Ugarit she is called *qnyt ilm*, "the creatress of the gods"; her consort at Ugarit is El, called *qny*, "creator"(*CTA*

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[99]In addition to the brief discussion here, see F. M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 33–35, and, more recently, W. A. Maier, 3d, *'Ašērah: Extrabiblical Evidence* (HSM 37; Atlanta, GA: Scholars, 1986), 167.

[100]See, for example, I. E. S. Edwards, "A Relief of Qudshu-Astarte-Anath in the Winchester College Collection," *JNES* 14 (1955), 49–51 (see also *ANESTP*, 830); *ANEP*, 470–474.

[101]For this translation, see Maier, *'Ašērah: Extrabiblical Evidence*, 9. The use of animal names as titles for gods, royalty, and nobility is well described by P. D. Miller, "Animal Names as Designations in Ugaritic and Hebrew," *UF* 2 (1970), 177–186.

[102]Much more speculative are the attempts to demonstrate that the iconography of *tnt* indicates Asherah's association with sacred trees. H. N. Wallace (*The Eden Narrative*, 113) has noted that the Phoenician/Punic "sign of *tnt*" is, on occasion, associated with a palm tree or palm branches. R. A. Oden (*De Syria Dea*, 149–155) has further argued that the caduceus associated with *tnt* is a highly abstracted depiction of a palm tree. But there is by no means a consensus that Asherah equals *tnt* (see, most recently, J. Day, "Asherah in the Hebrew Bible and Northwest Semitic Literature," *JBL* 105 [1986], 396–397, 404, and above, pp. 125–126, n. 73 [Chapter 3]). These analyses must therefore be seen as inconclusive.

10.3.6),[103] and, as we have seen, the progenitor deity *par excellence*.[104] J. Day has drawn attention to *PRU* 2, 2.43, *um ilm*, "the mother of the gods," a title which he argues refers to Asherah.[105] The gods of the Ugaritic pantheon are frequently called the "children of Asherah" or the "children of Qudšu" (Qudšu, as noted above, is an epithet of Asherah at Ugarit).[106] Also at Ugarit the seventy children of Asherah are mentioned (*CTA* 4.6.46), which should be compared to the mention of the seventy-seven (paralleled by eighty-eight) children of Asherah in the Hittite myth of Elkunirsha.[107] Asherah is further known at Ugarit as a wet-nurse of the gods (*CTA* 15.2.26–28; 23.24). If F. M. Cross is correct in identifying Asherah with Phoenician/Punic *tnt* (and there is much doubt here), then the epithets *ʾm* and *nutrix*, applied to *tnt*, are germane.[108] Finally, we must note again the suggestion that in Genesis 2–3 the figure of Eve, "the mother of all the living," incorporates at some level an allusion to Asherah, the mother goddess.[109]

We conclude that in Isa 65:3bα the prophet attacks the people for participating in fertility cults practiced in sacred groves or gardens. Because of her association with sacred trees and with fertility, the cult is best understood as devoted, at least in part, to Asherah.

One last aspect of the fertility cult associated with sacred trees remains to be discussed. Almost unanimously (excepting Isa 1:29; Isa

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[103]The reading is based on the reconstruction of H. L. Ginsberg, "Baʿl and ʿAnat," *Or* 7 (1938), 9.

[104]See above, pp. 155–157 (Chapter 3).

[105]J. Day, "Asherah in the Hebrew Bible," *JBL* 105 (1986), 387.

[106]One might note again here the Egyptian representations of the goddess Qudšu, which are blatantly erotic in character, emphasizing her fertility aspects. See again Edwards, "A Relief of Qudshu-Astarte-Anath," *JNES* 14 (1955), 49–51 (see also *ANESTP*, 830); *ANEP*, 470–474; and the recent discussion of Day, "Asherah," *JBL* 105 (1986), 389, 399.

[107]Available in *ANET* (3d ed.), 519.

[108]F. M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 32, and n. 115–116. But on problems with Cross' identification, see above, pp. 125–126, n. 73 (Chapter 3).

[109]See, most recently and completely, Wallace, *The Eden Narrative*, 147–159.

57:5; and Jer 3:13) the location of the sacred groves is described as on the mountains, on the hills, or at the *bāmôt*.[110] I have already suggested, based on a comparison of Isa 65:3bß and 65:7, that the locus of at least these two passages is the sanctuary of the *bāmâ*. Our identification of the rite practiced in gardens as a fertility ritual typically associated with the sacred trees of the *bāmôt* should indicate that Isa 65:3bα belongs with 65:3bß at the *bāmâ* sanctuary. That is, the people who according to my analysis of 65:3bß burned incense to Yahweh at his *bāmâ* also, in my interpretation of 3bα , participated in fertility rituals associated with Asherah.

Yet this should come as no surprise, for as discussed in detail in Chapter 2, new evidence from Kuntillet ʿAjrûd and Khirbet el-Qôm suggests that in some circles of Yahwism Asherah was considered the consort of Yahweh. Knowing what we do about Canaanite religion, we would in fact expect this, for, as noted above, the fertility goddess Asherah, at least at Ugarit, was the consort of the procreator *par excellence*, El. If we may once again recall the assertion of Wellhausen and his followers (discussed in Chapter 3) that Yahweh was in origin an El figure, we cannot but draw as a logical conclusion that Yahweh should have as his consort Asherah. Indeed, the argument in Chapter 3 that the fertility rituals of Isa 57:3–13 (practiced, notably, "under every green tree"), along with child sacrifice and cults of the dead, are a part of the mythology and the cult of El and by extension a part of the mythology and the cult of Yahweh is perfectly consistent with my current proposal that Isa 65:3b describes a sacred grove located at a *bāmôt* sanctuary where worship was dedicated to Yahweh along with Asherah. Isa 65:1–7 demonstrates that for certain devotees, the worship of Yahweh's consort Asherah seems to have been a part of their devotion to Israel's national god.

But the prophets insisted strictly on the worship of Yahweh alone and had no tolerance for a Yahwistic consort or cult sites where Asherah was worshiped. Indeed, once again in the sixth-century prophetic

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[110]See W. L. Holladay, "'On Every High Hill and Under Every Green Tree,'" *VT* 11 (1961), 170–176; also R. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel 2. Religious Institutions*, 285–287.

literature we have represented a conflict between the prophet, who has a fairly narrow definition of what practices constitute normative Yahwism, and the people, whose worship of Yahweh incorporates rites not approved of by the prophetic class. Our poet in fact outlines the parameters of this conflict perfectly in the very next chapter of Isaiah, where he says (Isa 66:3):

> He who slaughters an ox slays a man;
> he who sacrifices a lamb breaks a dog's neck;
> he who offers up an offering (offers) the blood of swine;
> he who offers memorial incense blesses an idol.

People and prophet are presented here as diptych. The first half of each line describes the view of the people, and in their self-definition, they are godly: making sacrifices, bringing offerings, burning incense. But the juxtaposed picture comes from the prophet, and to him the Yahwism of their reverences is heretical and wrong. What they present as devotion, he thus condemns as desecration; their articles of piety stand to him as profanation.

Dreaming Dreams in Secret Places

In Isa 57:3–13 the people of Jerusalem were indicted twice for participating in cults of the dead: first, for making offerings to dead spirits, and second, for seeking necromantic oracles from the deceased. Also in Isa 65:4aα the denunciation of the people for "sitting in graves" suggests an allusion to some cult of the dead. Although the text is hardly specific, T. J. Lewis has proposed that a cult of necromancy is condemned here, that the people are criticized for sitting in the cave-like tombs of the Judean wadis in the hope of receiving a message from some deceased spirit.[111] This thesis is best demonstrated by examining the parallel to "sitting in graves," "spending the night in secret places." Commentators as far back as the Greek translator of Isaiah have seen

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[111]T. J. Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit* (HSM 39; Atlanta: Scholars, 1989), 159.

here correctly an allusion to incubation rituals.[112]

The rite of incubation is known throughout the ancient Near East. Egyptian literature recounts the dream visitation received by Thut-mose IV as he slept at the feet of the sacred Sphinx, and Herodotus reports the dream incubation of the otherwise unknown pharaoh Sethos.[113] From Mesopotamia, Gudea's dream is the most famous;[114] an extensive

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[112]G reads *en tois spēlaiois koimōntai di' enypnia*, "in caves they lie down for the sake of dreams." G apparently interprets freely here the somewhat rare *nĕṣûrîm*. Modern commentators, going back to A. B. Ehrlich (*Randglossen zur hebräischen Bibel* 4 [Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1912], 227) have occasionally proposed reading *bên ṣûrîm*, "between the rocks," i.e., "in caverns." M. Dahood ("Textual Problems," *CBQ* 22 [1960], 409) has championed this view, drawing on N. Avigad's two tomb inscriptions from the Kidron valley, one of which describes the tomb as a *qbrh*, "grave" (N. Avigad, "The Epitaph of a Royal Steward from Siloam Village," *IEJ* 3 [1953], 137–152), while the other reads, according to Avigad, *ḥdr bktp ḥṣr*, "tomb-chamber in the side of the rock" (N. Avigad, "The Second Tomb-Inscription of the Royal Steward," *IEJ* 5 [1955], 163–166). This parallel usage of *qbrh* and *ṣr* in the two tomb inscriptions suggests to Dahood that the proper parallel to *qĕbārîm* in Isa 65:4a is *ṣûrîm*. But, as pointed out by T. J. Lewis (*Cults*, 160), D. Ussishkin's proposed restoration of *ḥdr bktp ḥṣryḥ*, "burial chamber in the side of a rock-cut tomb" ("On the Shorter Tomb Inscription from the 'Tomb of the Royal Steward,'" *BASOR* 196 [1969], 19–21) would disallow this proposed parallel. Note, though, that T. H. Gaster ("Notes on Isaiah," *Essays on the Occasion of the Seventieth Anniversary of the Dropsie University* [ed. A. I. Katsh and L. Nemoy; Philadelphia: The Dropsie University, 1979], 106) does read, in Isa 65:4, *bên ṣĕrîḥîm*, thus in support of the parallelism favored by Ussishkin. However, it seems undesirable to emend the MT to either *bên ṣûrîm* or to *bên ṣĕrîḥîm*, since the MT is perfectly understandable as it is and since it is supported by 1QIsa[a].

[113]For the dream of Thut-mose IV, see *ANET*, 449; for the dream of Sethos, see Herodotus 2.141 (for identification of Sethos, see S. West, "And It Came to Pass that Pharaoh Dreamed: Notes on Herodotus 2.139, 141," *Classical Quarterly* 37 [1987], 267, n. 25). On Egyptian dream visitations generally, see also C. J. Gadd, *Ideas of Divine Rule in the Ancient East* (London: Oxford University, 1948), 26.

[114]Gudea Cylinder A; discussed by H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods. A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society and Nature* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago, 1948, 1978), 252, 255–258; T.

discussion of other Babylonian and Assyrian dreams, including those of Nabonidus and Ashurpanipal, has been undertaken by A. L. Oppenheim.[115] Oppenheim has also discussed Hittite incubations, as described, for example, in the Hittite version of the Legend of Naram-Sin and in the "Plague Prayers" of King Mursilis.[116]

At Ugarit both King Kirta (*CTA* 14.1.26–14.3.153) and King Dan'il (*CTA* 17.1.1–17.4.23), according to legend, receive dreams of incubation. The fuller example is the story of Dan'il. As that story opens, Dan'il, who will eventually sire Aqhat, the story's hero, is seen offering sacrifices of food and drink to the gods. After offering sacrifices, Dan'il disrobes, ascends (presumably to a sleeping chamber, typically, in the ancient Near East, located in upper stories)[117] and lies

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Jacobsen, "Mesopotamia," *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man. An Essay in Speculative Thought in the Ancient Near East* (ed. H. Frankfort, et al.; Chicago and London: University of Chicago, 1946), 189–191; A. L. Oppenheim, *The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East, with a Translation of an Assyrian Dream Book* (Transactions of the American Philosophical Society 46/3; Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1956), 211–212.

[115]Oppenheim, *Dreams, passim*. See also the brief discussion of E. L. Ehrlich, *Der Traum im Alten Testament* (BZAW 73; Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1953), 56–57.

[116]Oppenheim, *Dreams*, 188; see also, for the dream of Naram-Sin, H. G. Güterbock, "Die historische Tradition und ihre litarische Gestaltung bei Babyloniern und Hethitern bis 1200," *ZA* 44 (N. F. 10; 1938), 49–65; Ehrich, *Der Traum*, 57; for the "Plague Prayers," M. Vieyra, "Les songes et leur interpretation chez les Hittites," *Les songes et leur interpretation* (Sources orientales 2; Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1959), 90.

[117]Biblical data from the Iron Age into the Roman period at least indicate this. Elijah's bedroom at Zarephath (1 Kgs 17:19) was in an upper chamber (*ʿălîyâ*). At Shumem Elisha had an apartment with a bed, table, chair, and lamp, called in the text a *ʿălîyat-qîr qĕtānnâ*, "a small roof chamber" (2 Kgs 4:10). Elijah's prophecy to Ahaziah, "You shall not come down (*lō' tērēd*) from the bed to which you ascended (*ʿālîtā*)" also suggests a bedroom in an upper story (2 Kgs 1:4, 6, 16). The "cool roof chamber" (*ʿălîyat hammĕqērâ*) where Ehud meets alone with Eglon is likewise to be understood as the king of Moab's bedroom (Judg 3:20). Acts 1:13 and 20:8 record that the apostles' lodgings as they travelled through Judea were in upper stories.

down to spend the night (*škb*, paralleled by *lwn*).[118] His intention, surely, is to vision a deity in his dreams. His supplication is repeated for six days; finally, on the seventh day, Baal responds to the supplicant and carries Dan'il's request to El and the divine council. Dan'il, it is revealed, is without progeny, and the purpose of his incubation is to ask the gods for a son. The request is granted and Dan'il awakens. His location during the dream is unspecified, but it is surely not Dan'il's own bed-chamber, for after awakening, Dan'il returns to his home, the palace (*bt*, paralleled by *hkl*). One is inclined to locate Dan'il's incubation in the temple, for incubation dreams characteristically take place at a sacred site. At any rate, upon returning home, Dan'il offers sacrifice to the Kotharot, the birth-goddesses, and, at the end of seven days, Dan'il's wife conceives.[119] The other major story of incubation from Ugarit, the dream of King Kirta, is essentially the same, although in it, some elements of the incubation are truncated.[120]

In the Bible the most complete account of a dream incubation is in 1 Kgs 3:4–15 (also 2 Chr 1:1–13), Solomon's dream at Gibeon. The story begins by recounting that Solomon went to Gibeon, the great *bāmâ* sanctuary (*habbāmâ haggĕdôlâ*), to sacrifice there, presumably offering his typical sacrifice of a thousand holocaust offerings on the altar. The Deuteronomists immediately follow the account of Solomon's sacrifice with the statement, "At Gibeon, Yahweh appeared to Solomon in a dream at night"; it seems that these biblical writers, like their Ugaritic counterparts, see sacrifice as the initial step in the rite of inducing incubation. The Chronicler states even more clearly that Solomon's goal

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[118]The root *lwn* is used in incubation rituals here; in Aqhat (CTA 17.1.6 [reading *yln* for the incomprehensible *ynl*] and *CTA* 17.1.16); in Gen 28:11; in 2 Sam 12:16; in Isa 65:4; and possibly in Ps 91:1. A. Caquot has in fact suggested that the root can have a technical meaning of "to incubate," especially in the Hithpael. See A. Caquot, "Le Psaume XCI," *Sem* 8 (1958), 25.

[119]For an extensive analysis of Dan'il's incubation, see J. Obermann, *How Daniel was Blessed with a Son. An Incubation Scene in Ugaritic* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1946), especially 7–13, 26–28.

[120]On Kirta's incubation, see the brief notes of J. C. Greenfield, "Studies in Aramaic Lexicography, I," *JAOS* 82 (1962), 296–297, n. 62; idem, "Some Glosses on the Keret Epic," *Eretz Israel* 9 (1969), 62.

in offering sacrifice is to induce a dream visitation by beginning his narrative with the phrase, "and Solomon and the assembly sought (*dāraš*) Yahweh" (2 Chr 1:5). *dāraš*, as has long been recognized, is a *termus technicus* used of soliciting cultic oracles.[121]

When God asks Solomon what Solomon wishes of Yahweh, Solomon replies by requesting understanding or wisdom, literally "a listening heart" (*lēb šōmēaʿ*). God grants Solomon's request and Solomon awakens. He returns to Jerusalem and offers sacrifice before the ark of the covenant. There follows immediately the most famous story of Solomon's wisdom, the dispute between two women over the motherhood of a child.[122]

We can garner from these stories of Danʾil and Solomon the major elements of an incubation ritual. First, a deity is beseeched with ritual sacrifice. Then the supplicant lies down to sleep in some special place, most likely a shrine or temple. The beseeched deity appears to the supplicant, and the supplicant makes a request. The request is granted, and the supplicant awakens; once awake, the dreamer returns home and again offers sacrifice. Typically, the story ends with some sign that the deity's gift has been granted: Danʾil's wife becomes pregnant within seven days; Solomon exhibits his wisdom by ordering a baby to be cut in half.[123]

The attitude of Yahwistic faith toward incubation rituals is not always

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[121]S. Wagner, "*dāraš*," *TDOT* 3 (ed. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1978), 302–304.

[122]See also the discussion of Ehrlich, *Der Traum*, 19–27, and the brief comments of J. Gray, *I & II Kings* (2d ed.; Old Testament Library; London: SCM, 1970), 124, and W. Richter, "Traum und Traumdeutung im AT," *BZ* 7 (1963), 217–218. For arguments against calling Solomon's dream an incubation, see A. Resch, *Der Traum im Heilsplan Gottes* (Freiburg: Herder, 1964), 114–115.

[123]While we should note that the story of Solomon's incubation and the story of the motherhood of a baby were originally two separate units of tradition, I would suggest that their editorial union is not accidental. Some redactor purposely placed the story of Solomon's wisdom after the story of Solomon's incubation in order to suggest the close relationship between the two.

easy to discern. Other than Isa 65:4aß, there are, in the Bible, no explicit condemnations of incubation. Indeed, to some biblical writers, incubation seems to be a legitimate part of Yahwism. Certainly, Solomon is not attacked for engaging in what looks like a Canaanite incubation ritual, but Solomon escaped censure for participating in many Canaanite practices, such as building a Canaanite/Phoenician-style temple and celebrating as its inaugural feast the Canaanite fall New Year. Still, S. Mowinckel[124] has suggested that Pss 3:6; 4:9; and 17:15 allude to Yahwistic incubation rituals in which an ill supplicant sleeps inside the temple in Jerusalem in hopes of receiving a visitation of healing from the deity. A. Caquot has analyzed Ps 91:1, 14–16 similarly.[125] If Mowinckel and Caquot are correct,[126] then incubations are permitted as part of the temple cult and there is no indication in the Psalter that such incubations are wrong. Also Jacob and Samuel both receive dreams similar to incubation dreams (Gen 28:10–22; Gen 46:1–4; 1 Sam 3:1–18). These dreams take place at sacred sites (the cult site at Bethel, the shrine of Isaac in Beer-sheba, and the temple at Shiloh), and one, Jacob's dream at Beer-sheba, was even preceded by the offering of sacrifice. Similarly, Jacob, in an act akin to the post-incubation rite of offering sacrifice, erected and anointed a stone pillar at Bethel after his dream. That these narratives, like the story of Solomon's dream and the incubation rituals possibly alluded to in the Psalms, are recounted in the Bible without censure indicates an acceptance of incubation rituals within some circles of Yahwism.

Occasionally, however, attempts to induce Yahweh through incubation rituals fail. David besought (*biqqēš*)[127] Yahweh in an attempt to save the life of his first child by Bathsheba (2 Sam 12:16).

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[124]S. Mowinckel, *Psalmenstudien* 1 (Amsterdam: P. Schippers, 1966), 154–157.

[125]A. Caquot, "Le Psaume XCI," *Sem* 8 (1958), 25–26.

[126]Due to the obscurity of the references in the Psalms in question, it is impossible to determine whether they are correct; for an attempt to prove that Mowinckel is not, see Ehrlich, *Der Traum*, 51–52.

[127]Also a *termus technicus* for soliciting cultic oracles; see S. Wagner, "*biqqēš*," *TDOT* 2, 236–239.

The king fasted all day (another element of a typical incubation ritual)[128] and then went and slept (*škb*, *lwn*) that night on the ground. The deity, however, failed to appear, and seven days later, the child died. Saul, too, sought Yahweh, for advice about the Philistine threat, "but Yahweh did not answer him, either through dreams, or through Urim, or through prophets" (1 Sam 28:6). Saul fell the next day against the Philistines at Mount Gilboa. Still, even in these texts incubation, while not considered failsafe, is not perceived as wrong or alien to Yahwism. But in Isa 65:4aß incubation is included among a list of condemned cultic practices. Why?

I believe that the poet of Isa 65:1–7, with his parallel attacks on incubation in v 4aß and on the practice of "sitting in graves" in 4aα, perceives that there is a dangerous tendency for incubation to become associated with necromancy. While necromancy and incubation are not identical, they are certainly similar: both rites seek to summon some kind of spirit or being, the aim is to garner some kind of benefit for the supplicant. The difference between the two, of course, is the nature of the being summoned: in the case of incubation, a god; in the case of necromancy, a dead spirit. But even here the distinction between the two is blurred, for, as has been discussed in conjunction with Isa 57:3–13, dead spirits in the ancient Near East are assigned the language of divinity and thus are called *ilu* in Ugaritic (in the Ugaritic King List [*KTU* 1.113]) and *ʾĕlōhîm* in the Hebrew Bible (Isa 18:19; 1 Sam 28:13).[129] In both necromantic and incubation rituals, therefore, it is a "god" who is summoned.

Indeed, if we examine again the ancient Near Eastern data regarding incubation, we will see that necromancy and incubation can be

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[128]See Ehrlich, *Der Traum*, 14–15, and E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 1951), 110; further on the Greek evidence, L. Deubner, *De incubatione* (Capitula duo; Dissertation inauguralis quam ad summos in philosphia honores ab amplissimo philosophorum Gissensium ordine; Giessen, 1899), 14–17; A. Petropoulou, *Studies in Greek Cult and Sacrificial Literature* (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation; University of Colorado; Boulder, CO; 1984), 72, n. 99, and the references there.

[129]See above, pp. 150–151, and n. 174 on p. 150 (Chapter 3).

intertwined. In Mesopotamia, in a dream of Nabonidus, a dead spirit, namely Nebuchadnezzar, one of Nabonidus' royal predecessors, appears in lieu of the expected deity.[130] Similar dream appearances of dead spirits are reported in Greek literature.[131] Also in Greece we find that the graves of dead heroes were sites at which incubation was practiced and that incubation dreams were often sought at certain chasms reputed to be entrances to the underworld.[132]

This interweaving of the cult of necromancy and incubation in the biblical world is somewhat more subtle, but it exists. Saul, according to 1 Samuel 28, turns first to dreams, then to Urim and prophecy, and finally to necromancy in an attempt to cope with the Philistine threat.[133] That is, when Saul's efforts to beseech Yahweh directly through dreams fail, Saul turns to other mouthpieces of the deity, finally to Yahweh's mouthpiece *extraordinaire*, the dead Samuel. Incubation is a short step away from summoning the dead. This association of incubation with necromancy is also indicated by the vocabulary the two rites share. In Solomon's incubation dream at Gibeon, he sought (*dāraš*) Yahweh (2 Chr 1:15). This same verb, *dāraš*, is used in Deut 18:11, where the Israelites are forbidden to practice necromancy (*dōrēš 'ēl hammēṯîm*;

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[130]For a translation, see Oppenheim, *Dreams*, 250; also see Oppenheim's discussion on p. 191.

[131]Dodds, *Greeks and the Irrational*, 111.

[132]Dodds, *Greeks and the Irrational*, 110–111. On the association of dead heroes with incubation, see also L. R. Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults and Ideas of Immortality* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1921), who discusses Asklepios, whose healing cult had as an integral feature incubation, as a dead hero. The cult of Amphiaraos could be similarly analyzed, as could those of Podalirius (Lycophron, *Alexandra* 1050–1051) and Calchas (Strabo, *Geography* 6.3.9).

[133]Some ancient Near Eastern materials on the modes of beseeching the deity in 1 Samuel 28 are collected by F. Schmidtke, "Träume, Orakel und Totengeister als Künder der Zukunft in Israel und Babylonien," *BZ* 11 (1967), 240–246. Less immediately parallel, but still of note, are the Hittite prayers of Mursilis (above, p. 196 and n. 116), in which the king mentions oracles, prophets, and incubations as three ways to discern the will of the divine; similarly *Iliad* 1.62–63, where Achilles calls for either a prophet, an interpreter of omens, or an interpreter of dreams to determine the will of the gods.

see also Isa 8:19).

Thus, while not identical, we can conclude that incubation and necromancy are very close. Here, perhaps, lies our clue to Isa 65:4a. The danger in incubation may be in the practices like necromancy to which it can lead. The biblical writers, we know from Isa 57:3–13, are adamant in their intolerance of necromancy. Incubation is similar to necromantic ritual in aim and in its description of the kind of being summoned. Incubation also has a tendency to lead to necromantic rites, as in the story of Saul at Gilboa. Incubation further shares lexical similarities with necromantic vocabulary. For these reasons, incubation may be censured as illicit in Isa 65:1–7.[134]

Eating the Flesh of Swine

Of the ritual observances biblical religion required of the ancient Israelites, the law forbidding the eating of swine's flesh is surely one of the best-known. Archaeological remains indeed suggest that the Israelites throughout the Iron Age ate no pork, although pig bones do occur frequently at Philistine sites.[135] It may thus come as a surprise

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[134]It is interesting to note here that in the same way that the line between incubation and necromancy becomes blurred in biblical religion, so too can the demarcations between sleep and death become erased. For example, in Isa 57:7–8 *miškāb* carries connotations of both "bed" and "grave." I also remarked above that upper stories in Israel were typically loci of bedrooms, but we should add that these upper-story bed-chambers played an important role in the rituals surrounding death. David retired to an upper story (*ʿălîyat haśśaʿar*) to mourn the death of Absalom (2 Sam 19:1). Upper bed-chambers also seem to be the place where the corpse is laid out after a person dies (1 Kgs 17:17–24; 2 Kgs 4:18–37; Acts 9:36–43). And, certainly, their upper-story bedrooms are the place of death for Eglon (Judg 3:15–20) and Ahaziah (2 Kgs 1:1–18). See further Stager, "Archaeology of the Family," *BASOR* 260 (1985), 16.

[135]P. W. Lapp ("The 1963 Excavation at Taʿannek," *BASOR* 173 [1964], 28; "Taanach By the Waters of Megiddo," *BA* 30 [1967], 23; "The 1968 Excavations at Tell Taʿannek," *BASOR* 195 [1969], 45–47) proposed that pig astragali were represented in Iron Age strata at Taanach and Megiddo (tenth century). Moreover, these bones were found in cultic contexts, suggesting that pigs played a role in the religion of ancient Israel. But the Megiddo bones have been re-studied by a faunal analyst, P. Wattenmaker, who has suggested that the

that the Bible pays almost no attention to the dietary law which bans pork. In the Pentateuch two almost identical verses, Lev 11:7 and Deut 14:8, forbid the Israelites to eat pork. Lev 11:7 is slightly longer; it reads:

> And the swine, because it parts the hoof and is cloven-footed, but does not chew the cud, is unclean to you.

Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, the prohibition against eating pork is mentioned only three times: in Isa 65:4b and in two related verses, Isa 66:3 and 66:17.[136]

Why did Mosaic law forbid the ancient Israelites to eat pork? Allegorical,[137] ethical,[138] and medical[139] explanations have been

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remains are of sheep and goat, not pig. See L. E. Stager and S. R. Wolff, "Olive Press," *BASOR* 243 (1981), 100, n. 7. But cf. G. W. Ahlstrom, *An Archaeological Picture of Iron Age Religions in Ancient Palestine* (StudOr 55, 3; Helsinki: Helsingin yliopiston monistuspalvelu, 1984), 13–14.

[136]Outside the Hebrew Bible, in non-canonical works, the law prohibiting the eating of pork is more widely discussed. The book of 4 Maccabees focuses almost exclusively on the martyrdom of the high priest, Eleazar, and the subsequent martyrdoms of seven brothers and their mother, all of whom refused to eat swine's flesh when ordered to do so by Antiochus Epiphanes (4 Macc 5:1–18:24; cf. 2 Macc 6:18–7:42). Antiochus also, according to the books of Maccabees, commanded that swine be sacrificed in the temple in Jerusalem (1 Macc 1:47; cf. 2 Macc 6:5, 18, 21). In the second-century B.C.E. Letter of Aristeas Jewish dietary laws are discussed in a lengthy excursus. Finally, we might note that in the NT, although the eating of pork is not specifically discussed, the pig is an animal of shame and degradation (Matt 7:6; Mark 5:1–13 [cf. Matt 8:18–31; Luke 8:26–33]; Luke 15:20; 2 Pet 2:22). See further S. Stein, "The Dietary Laws in Rabbinic and Patristic Literature," *Studia Patristica* 2 (1957), 141–154.

[137]Among ancient writers, allegorical explanations were advanced by Philo in particular. See, for example, Philo, *On Husbandry* (*De Agricultura*) 132. Similar sentiments are expressed in the ancient sources by Eleazar, in his speech in the letter of Aristeas (*Ep. Arist.* 153–155). Moderns, too, can advance an allegorical explanation; see, for example, M. Douglas (*Purity and Danger. An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* [London: Ark Paperbacks, 1966], 48), who quotes a twentieth-century alegorizer, Bishop Challoner, in his notes on the Westminster Bible.

advanced. But most modern biblical scholars have preferred to seek a religious explanation for the dietary laws. These laws, after all, were written by religious clerics as part of a code of religious law.

Those who advance religious reasons to explain the prohibition against eating pork are supported completely by the references to the eating of swine's flesh in Isa 65:4b (and, by extension, in 66:3 and 66:17). As we have seen, the other activities condemned by the prophet in Isa 65:1–7 are clearly cultic in nature. Burning incense on altars on the *bāmôt*, participating in the cult of Asherah there, and engaging in rites of incubation and necromancy are religious acts considered by the prophet to be unacceptable in Yahwism. It therefore follows that the eating of swine's flesh must likewise be to our poet a non-Yahwistic cultic act. Moreover, the parallel to "swine's flesh" in Isa 65:4bß is *piggûlîm*, a technical term for unclean sacrificial flesh. This further suggests that the referent in Isa 65:4bα is sacrificial meals.

Isa 66:3, although a difficult text, also indicates that religious reasons, not allegorical, medical, or ethical ones, stand behind the Israelite prohibition that forbids the eating of pork. The text, which I have had occassion to quote earlier, reads:

> He who slaughters an ox slays a man,
> he who sacrifices a lamb breaks a dog's neck,
> he who offers up an offering (offers) the blood of swine,
> he who offers memorial incense blesses an idol.

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[138]Both ancients and moderns also advance ethical explanations. Among ancients, see, for example, 4 Macc 5:22–24. The twentieth-century scholar I. Epstein writes that the real object of the dietary laws "is to train the Israelite in self-control as the indispensable first step for the attainment of holiness" (I. Epstein, *Judaism. A Historical Presentation* [Baltimore: Penguin, 1959], 25; this quote was again brought to my attention by M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 44; Douglas' work has been very useful to me at other points in my discussion as well).

[139]Among ancients, see again Philo, for example, Philo, *On the Special Laws* (*De Specialibus Legibus*) 4.100. The same theory is advanced among modern scholars by G. E. Wright (G. E. Wright, "The Book of Deuteronomy: Introduction and Exegesis," *IB* 2 [Nashville: Abingdon, 1953], 423–424).

Here, a list of four religiously acceptable sacrifices is paralleled by what must be, to the prophet, four illegitimate cult offerings (although the exact significance of killing a man and breaking a dog's neck is, admittedly, unknown).[140] But whatever the precise explanations of the cult acts denounced in Isa 66:3, the context of this verse makes clear that the issue is religious sacrifice. In fact the verb that governs *dam ḥăzîr*, "swine's blood," is the Hiphil of *ʿālâ*, a verb of the sacrificial cult.[141] This confirms that in Isaiah 65 and 66 those eating swine's flesh

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[140]J. M. Sasson ("Isaiah LXVI 3–4a," *VT* 26 [1976], 199–207) has suggested that the key to Isa 66:3 is a Hittite ritual for purification of a defeated army. This Hittite ritual involved a human sacrifice, followed by the sacrifice of a dog and then a pig. That the same sacrifices occur in the same order in Isa 66:3 is, to Sasson, significant. But Sasson fails to adequately explain how a Late Bronze Age Anatolian practice shows up in Iron II Jerusalem. Furthermore, to find a defeated army associated with Isa 66:3, Sasson has to redate the text to the pre-exilic period. This is difficult (cf. R. de Vaux, "Les sacrifices de porcs en Palestine et dans l'Ancien Orient," *Von Ugarit nach Qumrân* [*Festschrift Eissfeldt*; ed. J. Hempel and L. Rost; Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1958], 254–255, and F. J. Stendebach, "Das Schweineopfer im Alten Orient," *BZ* 18 [1974], 265). All that one can say about "slaying a man" is that the human sacrifice described here is not a part of the well-known ancient Near Eastern cult of child sacrifice. In references to child sacrifice in Phoenician and Punic inscriptions *ʾlš*, the term used in Isa 66:3, does not occur. Likewise, the verb used with *ʾlš*, *nākâ*, is not a verb typically used of child sacrifice.

Similarly, in discussing "breaking a dog's neck," we can only note that some groups around Israel were sacrificing dogs. A Persian dog cemetery has been found at Ashkelon. Further afield geographically, but contemporary with Isa 66:3, is the evidence for the sacrifice of dogs at Sardis. At Sardis excavators have found approximately twenty-six separate examples of remains of a "ritual dinner." Each cache is comprised of four pottery vessels, an iron knife, and the skeleton of a puppy, zero to three months old (C. H. Greenewalt, Jr., *Ritual Dinners in Early Historic Sardis* [University of California Publications: Classical Studies 17; Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California, 1978]). Scholars have compared Hittite (N. Robertson, "Hittite Ritual at Sardis," *Classical Antiquity* 1 [1981], 122–140), Carian (J. G. Pedley, "Carians in Sardis," *JHS* 94 [1974], 96–99), and Greek and Roman data (Greenewalt, *Ritual Dinners*, 40–54) in attempts to explain these sacrifices, but no consensus has emerged.

[141]P. Volz (*Jesaia* 2 [KAT 9; Leipzig: A. Deichertsche, 1932], 290),

are condemned for religious, not allegorical, ethical, or medical, reasons.

In 1958 R. de Vaux assembled the archaeological data on the cultic use of swine in the Levant and compared to it much of the ancient Near Eastern and eastern Mediterranean data on the eating of pork.[142] De Vaux's conclusions are significant. First he claims, *contra* A. Bertholet,[143] that nowhere in the ancient Near East are swine used in normative religious ritual: "cet usage est resté rare."[144] Instead, de Vaux believes that pigs were a sacred animal in mystery cults, both in the ancient Near East and in the eastern Mediterranean world. De Vaux cites as evidence:

> (1) the association of swine with the demonic and the underworld in rites of magic and exorcism in the Mesopotamian[145] and Hittite[146] realms (see also Mark 5:1–13 [Matt 8:18–32; Luke 8:26–33]);
>
> (2) the use of pig in the sacrificial cult only on rare and special

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followed most recently by R. de Vaux ("Les sacrifices de porcs," *Festschrift Eissfeldt*, 263, n. 97, and *Studies in Old Testament Sacrifice* [Cardiff: University of Wales, 1964], 69), emends this line to read *mᶜlh mnḥh ḥmd ḥzyr*, "he who offers an offering lusts after swine." Surely, though, the emendation is forced and unnecessary; rather, the verb *heᶜĕlâ* does double-duty here. See Sasson, "Isaiah LXVI 3–4a," *VT* 26 (1976), 202.

[142]R. de Vaux, "Les sacrifices de porcs," *Festschrift Eissfeldt*, 250–265.

[143]A. Bertholet, *Kulturgeschichte Israels* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1919), 23, writes, "Das Schwein scheint, wie z. B. in Babylonien und im alten Griechenland, das bevorzugte Opfertier gewesen zu sein."

[144]R. de Vaux, "Les sacrifices de porcs," *Festschrift Eissfeldt*, 261.

[145]See, in addition to de Vaux, "Les sacrifices de porcs," *Festschrift Eissfeldt*, 253–254, from the first quarter of this century, I. M. Price, "Swine in Old Testament Taboo," *JBL* 44 (1925), 154–157. For more modern analyses, see F. J. Stendebach, "Das Schweineopfer," *BZ* 18 (1974), 265, and, briefly, A. von Rohr Sauer, "The Cultic Role of the Pig in Ancient Times," *In Memoriam Paul Kahle* (BZAW 103; Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1968), 203. Finally, cf. A. Salonen, "Beiträge zur Geschichte des Schweines im Zweistromlande," StudOr 43/9 (1974), 3–11.

[146]See Sasson, "Isaiah LXVI 3–4a," *VT* 26 (1976), 199–207.

> occasions: once a year among the Harranians, as reported by Al-Nadim, every April 2 on Cyprus, at times of the full moon in Egypt;[147]
>
> (3) the sacrifice of pigs in secret rituals, such as the initiatory rite of the mystery cult of Eleusis;
>
> (4) the association of the pig with the chthonic deity Seth in Egypt, and with Demeter, who has chthonic characteristics, in Greece;[148]
>
> (5) the discovery of sacrificial remains of pig in second millennium subterranean sanctuaries in Palestine, at Gezer[149] and at Tell Far'ah.[150]

Underworld deities, demons, rare and secret sacrifices, subterranean cult sites: these data suggest to de Vaux that the pig is an animal used in and sacred to ancient Near Eastern mystery religions.[151]

After advancing this thesis, de Vaux turns to the Bible, and, in

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[147]The Harranian and Cyprian data were originally presented by W. R. Smith, *The Religion of the Semites. The Fundamental Institutions* (New York: Meridian, 1956), 140. For the place of pork in Egyptian religion, see, in addition to de Vaux, "Les sacrifices de porcs," *Festschrift Eissfeldt*, 255–256; P. E. Newberry, "The Pig and the Cult-Animal of Set," *JEA* 14 (1928), 211–225; more recently, see A. von Rohr Sauer, "The Cultic Role of the Pig," *In Memoriam Paul Kahle*, 202, 205; F. J. Stendebach, "Das Schweineopfer," *BZ* 18 (1974), 265–266.

[148]For the Egyptian materials, see, in addition to de Vaux, the references listed in n. 147 above. On the place of the pig in the cult of Demeter, see de Vaux, "Les sacrifices de porcs," *Festschrift Eissfeldt*, 259–260; A. von Rohr Sauer, "The Cultic Role of the Pig," *In Memoriam Paul Kahle*, 203; F. J. Stendebach, "Das Schweineopfer," *BZ* 18 (1974), 268.

[149]R. A. S. Macalister, *Gezer* 2, 378–379.

[150]R. de Vaux, "Les fouilles de Tell el-Far'ah près Naplousse. Sixième campagne," *RB* 64 (1957), 552–580.

[151]De Vaux has, to the best of my knowledge, been followed only by F. J. Stendebach, "Das Schweineopfer," *BZ* 18 (1974), 270–271. Also note G. C. Heider, *The Cult of Molek. A Reassessment* (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series 43; Sheffield, England: JSOT, 1986), 389–391.

particular, to Isaiah 65–66. These texts, de Vaux suggests, confirm his claim that the sacrifice of swine is part of a cult of ancient Near Eastern mystery religions.

De Vaux begins his analysis with an examination of Isa 65:4 and the dependent Isa 66:17. He sees in these verses certain aspects of mystery religions: strange settings (in gardens [Isa 65:3; 66:17], in graves [65:4], in secret places [65:4]), strange hours (at night [65:4]), sanctification of cultic participants (65:5), and the presence of a mystagogue (66:17).[152] Of Isa 65:4 and 66:17 he writes, "C'est un culte mystérique qui comportait la manducation du porc et d'autres animaux ordinairement considérés comme impurs."[153] Isa 66:3, to which de Vaux next turns, is, he believes, a further condemnation of mystery religions. In Isa 66:3 the people, according to de Vaux, are condemned for their religious syncretism. They perform legitimate cult acts such as sacrificing oxen and lambs and offering cereal offerings and incense, but at the same time participate in illicit rites of mystery cults. "Le texte [Isa 66:3] s'accorde donc avec ceux d'Is. 65 4 et 66 17 pour attester la persistance en Palestine et l'adoption par des Israélites infidèles des rites magiques ou mystérieux dans lesquels le porc jouaid un rôle."[154]

De Vaux is to be commended for seeking an explanation that encompasses Isa 65:4, 66:3, and 66:17. But his thesis that what is condemned here is participation in mystery cults is not wholly satisfying. Indeed, we might question the very existence of such cults in Palestine, for indigenous Semitic material on the existence and nature of mystery religions is lacking. De Vaux himself is forced to draw primarily on evidence from the Hellenic world. It is also difficult to agree with de Vaux that the cult sites mentioned in Isaiah 65–66 are strange and mysterious places. The gardens mentioned in Isa 65:3 and 66:17, I have argued, are none other than the cult sites of fertility

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[152]On Isa 66:17, see also G. Fohrer, "Kritik an Tempel, Kultus und Kultusausübung in nachexilischer Zeit," *Studien zu alttestamentlichen Texten und Themen (1966–1972)* (BZAW 155; Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1981), 84–85.

[153]R. de Vaux, "Les sacrifices de porcs," *Festschrift Eissfeldt*, 263.

[154]R. de Vaux, "Les sacrifices de porcs," *Festschrift Eissfeldt*, 264.

rituals, associated with sacred trees on the hills, mountains, and *bāmôt*. Isa 65:7 confirms this identification. In Isa 65:4aα graves are hardly a strange site for cultic activity once it is recognized, as we have noted, that the activity in question is necromancy. Similarly, the nighttime hours mentioned in Isa 65:4aß are strange only until one realizes that the ritual in question, incubation, is by definition an evening rite. Finally, we should note that de Vaux's identification of a mystagogue in Isa 66:17 is very suspect. The text is difficult; the relevant words read: *hammitqaddĕšîm wĕhammiṭṭāharîm ʾel haggannôt ʾaḥar ʾaḥat* (*Kelîb*: *ʾaḥad*) *battāwek*. De Vaux translates: "Ceux qui se sanctifient et se purifient pour l'accès des jardins, derrière quelqu'un qui se tient au centre." In such a translation Hebrew *ʾel* is interpreted to mean "pour l'accès"; "se tient" is likewise added for sense. We must agree with de Vaux that it is not easy to find an explanation of *ʾaḥar ʾaḥat* (or *ʾaḥad*) *battāwek*. The versions are confused, as is the MT (as the *Kelîb/Qere*ʾ indicates). Most scholars, I think correctly, suspect scribal error here.[155] At any rate, such a suspect reading cannot be used as evidence for a mystagogue.

A more serious weakness in de Vaux's analysis is that he tends to overlook parts of Isaiah 65–66 that do not fit into his thesis of mystery cults. In Isa 66:17 worshipers are condemned not only for eating swine's flesh, but also for eating detestable things (*šeqeṣ*) and mice (*ʿakbār*). In Isa 65:4b the parallel to swine's flesh is the broth of abominable things (*piggûlîm*). On these foods de Vaux does not specifically comment except to say that part of mystery cults was to eat swine and "d'autres animaux ordinairement considérés impurs."[156] That is, de Vaux, believing that the eating of pork identifies the cults of Isa 65:4, 66:3, and 66:17 as mystery religions, assumes that *šeqeṣ*, *ʿakbār*, and *piggûlîm* are also part of the language of mystery cults.[157] But this

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[155]See J. A. Emerton, "Notes on Two Verses in Isaiah (26 16 and 66 17)," *Prophecy. Essays presented to Georg Fohrer on his sixty-fifth birthday, 6 September 1980* (ed. J. A. Emerton; BZAW 150; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1980), 21–24.

[156]R. de Vaux, "Les sacrifices de porcs," *Festschrift Eissfeldt*, 263.

[157]In a somewhat similar analysis, G. W. Ahlstrom considers the mouse to be

assumption does not hold. Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible *šeqeṣ*, *ʿakbār*, and *piggûlîm* are anything but the language of mystery cults. These words, rather, belong almost exclusively to the language of P.

Most common is *šeqeṣ*.[158] The word occurs some eleven times in the Hebrew Bible; here, in Isa 66:17, in Ezek 8:10, and nine times in the book of Leviticus. Of the occurrences in Leviticus, eight are in Leviticus 11, the chapter on clean and unclean animals which includes the law prohibiting the eating of swine. *piggûl* occurs but three times in the Bible outside Isaiah 65–66, in Lev 7:18, 19:7, and Ezek 4:14, each time referring to ritually unclean sacrifices. The mouse, *ʿakbār*, is referred to only once as food, in Lev 11:29, where its flesh is forbidden to Israelites.[159]

It is apparent that the prohibitions against eating *piggûl*, *šeqeṣ*, and *ʿakbār* are limited to the priestly language of Leviticus and Ezekiel. This suggests that the key to the "eating of swine's flesh" in Isa 65:4b, 66:3, and 66:17 is likewise to be found in Priestly works, in, I suggest, Leviticus 11, where, after all, the prohibition against swine's flesh is found, and where both *šeqeṣ* and *ʿakbār* are forbidden.

In Leviticus 11 the reason given for the food laws is one of holiness. "I am Yahweh your God; consecrate yourselves therefore and be holy, for I am holy" (Lev 11:44; cf. Lev 19:2 and 20:7). That is, the holiness of God is the cause of the dietary laws; the purpose of the laws is to guarantee the holiness of God's people. Those who fail to keep the food laws are in the opposite state from holiness, uncleanness. This distinction between holiness and uncleanness is, moreover, cosmic in significance; the well-being of Israel and her universe depended on

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an animal sacred in Philistine religion; this Philistine custom, Ahlstrom argues, infiltrated into Judah and is reflected in Isa 65:1–7 and 66:17. Moreover, Ahlstrom believes that the references to "gardens," "tombs," and "secret places" in Isa 65:1–7 and Isa 66:17 indicate that mice play a role in mystery religions, especially the occult. See Ahlstrom, *Archaeological Picture*, 7–8.

[158]See also above, pp. 69–71 (Chapter 2).

[159]Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, in 1 Samuel 6, golden images of mice are sent by the Philistines as a guilt offering when the ark is returned.

maintaining the separation between these two incompatibles.[160] This distinction was indeed so important to the Priestly school that it included holiness among the aspects of reality defined by God at creation (Gen 2:3).

Both holiness and uncleanness are infectious. Leviticus 11, for example, advises that an Israelite who touches or carries a carcass of an unclean animal is rendered unclean (Lev 11:24–28). Moreover, it is not just humans who can be contaminated by uncleanness: wooden objects, vessels, garments, skins, sacks, ovens, stoves, and parts of springs and cisterns are all rendered unclean by the carcass of an unclean animal (Lev 11:32, 35–36). Certain unclean objects can further spread the contagion of uncleanness: any food or water, for example, that is held in an unclean earthenware container is made unclean by the contaminated vessel (Lev 11:34). Similarly, ovens and stoves, once unclean, transmit uncleanness to all with which they come in contact (Lev 11:35). Such unclean vessels, ovens, and stoves must be destroyed (Lev 11:33, 35).

Elsewhere in Leviticus it is made clear that holiness also can be communicated. In Lev 6:18 the law states that all who touch the male Aaronids who ate the cereal offering shall become holy (cf. Lev 6:27). To be the recipient of transferred holiness, however, is not necessarily a positive thing. Earthenware vessels used to boil an offering must be broken to pieces for holiness has contaminated them (Lev 6:28). Bronze vessels, which are, unlike earthenware, non-absorbent, need not be destroyed, but still must be carefully scoured to remove all holiness. Humans, too, are endangered by holiness. In 2 Sam 6:6–11 Uzzah dies because he touches the ark, killed by the holiness the cult object communicates. Num 4:15 makes explicit that holiness brings death: the Kohathites, designated to carry all the cult apparatus in the wilderness, "must not touch the holy things lest they die." Also, in Exod 19:12–13, whoever touches the mountain of Yahweh's revelation is sentenced to die, as is anyone who then comes into contact with the primary

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[160]The discussion of M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 49–57, is particularly instructive here; also see L. E. Toombs, "Clean and Unclean," *IDB* 1 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), 641b–648a.

offender. Holiness is dangerous; holiness destroys.

This idea that holiness is contagious and dangerous is reflected in Isa 65:5. The people, as quoted by the prophet, cry out, "Keep to yourself, do not come near me, for I am too holy for you." The warning to stay away "for I am too holy for you" is based on the notion of holiness as communicable; the speakers warn others not to approach them lest those who draw near be infected by the dangerous holiness.

How ironic, though, is this claim of holiness. For the prophet has preceded the people's cry, "I am too holy for you," with a description of the people's diet: swine's flesh and the broth of ritually unclean sacrifices (65:4b). Swine's flesh and ritually unclean sacrifices are, of course, two of the things that the Holiness code in Leviticus 11 describes as causing uncleanness, the opposite of holiness! It is true, the prophet implies, that the people are dangerous and should not be approached. But they should be avoided not because of the dangers of holiness, but because they communicate uncleanness. The people claim arrogantly, "I am too holy for you." The prophet, relying on the ironic juxtaposition of unclean dietary practices (v 4b) with claims of holiness (v 5a), condemns in the harshest terms their pretentious claims. Holy, he says, is the one thing the speakers of 65:5a are not. Rather, by the terms of the dietary code whose tenets the prophet embraces, the people are unclean. They endanger not because of their sanctity, but their sin.

CONCLUSIONS

In the past it was rather a commonplace in histories of Israelite religion to follow the Deuteronomistic school in viewing Josiah's reforms as a major turning point in the development of ancient Yahwistic faith. Before the reforms, so conventional wisdom taught, Israelite religion was dominated by a struggle between "pure Yahwism" and various "pagan and syncretistic abuses";[1] after the reforms "foreign," particularly "Canaanite," elements such as the *bāmôt*, fertility rituals, and child sacrifice were either abolished or were so radically suppressed that they quickly died out. Fortunately, this kind of analysis has in general fallen out of favor, as our increased understanding of the Deuteronomists' propagandistic purposes, as well as a growing body of archaeological, epigraphical, and comparative data,[2] make clear that the materials claiming widespread efficacy for the Josianic reform are patent fabrications. The reform was instead limited in scope, temporary in effect, and clearly failed in its goal of impressing a monolithic description of Yahwism on all of Yahweh's devotees. My study certainly confirms this revised evaluation. As we have seen by studying the cults condemned in Jeremiah 7 and 44 and in

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[1]The words are those of G. Fohrer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (London: SPCK, 1968), 237; I could have similarly quoted J. Bright, *A History of Israel* (2 ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972), 317; G. Fohrer, *History of Israelite Religion* (Nashville and New York: Abingdon, 1972), 292; R. Pfeiffer, *Religion in the Old Testament. The History of a Spiritual Triumph* (ed. C. C. Forman; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961), 166–167; J. A. Soggin, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Old Testament Library; London: SCM, 1976), 200; Th. C. Vriezen, *The Religion of Ancient Israel* (London: Lutterworth, 1967), 228–229. A similar catalogue, detailing the kind of vocabulary typically used in conjunction with the *'ăšērâ*, can be found in S. M. Olyan, *Asherah and the Cult of Yahweh in Israel* (SBLMS 34; Atlanta: Scholars, 1988), 5, n. 14.

[2]Such as the Arad evidence discussed above, pp. 51–52, n. 56 (Chapter 2).

Ezekiel 8, that which I have labelled popular religion continued to thrive in Judah, seemingly without interruption,[3] in the late seventh century and into the first part of the sixth.

Yet despite this scholarly re-evaluation of Josiah's reform, most biblicists today would still claim that there was at some point a radical purification of the Yahwistic cult. The discrediting of the Josianic reform as the purificatory agent has thus only served to push the date of the cleansing forward, with current consensus now holding that the expurgation happened somwhere in the middle of the exilic period and was inspired by the teachings of the sixth-century priests and prophets. But again our study raises doubts. The thesis of exilic purification may well be true for those who were in exile in Babylon and who were guided by the likes of Second Isaiah, Ezekiel, and the Priestly school. But we must remember that however influential these theologians have been in the creation of biblical religion and ultimately of Judaism, they were not the only Yahwists of the sixth century. Among those who remained behind in Judah, the religion did not change. There, as our study of Isaiah 57 and 65 has revealed, popular cults continued to thrive throughout the exilic and into the post-exilic period. For a second time, then, conventional wisdom is proved false.

Conventional wisdom is found lacking in yet a third way. The phenomenon of popular religion with which I have been concerned in this study is typically labelled (as above) "syncretistic," "foreign," "pagan," "Canaanite." But it is not. Most of the manifestations of popular religion which I have described are native to the west Semitic sphere and even to Israel, and they are indigenous in the practice of

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[3]I do not for a moment believe the contention of P. R. Ackroyd (*Exile and Restoration. A Study of Hebrew Thought of the Sixth-Century B.C.* [Old Testament Library; London: SCM, 1968], 40–41) and scholars like him that popular religion was generally abolished in the Josianic reform and that it only remanifested itself in the late seventh and early sixth centuries as a "drastic reaction" (Ackroyd's words) to the unprecedented crisis which was besetting the Jerusalem community. I would argue instead that popular religion was ongoing in Judah, where for many in the seventh and sixth centuries it was their regular means of religious expression. Regardless of what Josiah ordered, these routine observances never ceased.

Yahwistic religion. Indeed, I have been at some pains to demonstrate precisely this point. The worshipers who slaughtered their children at the Tophet were sacrificing these children to Yahweh. The people who burned incense at the *bāmôt* were offering incense to Yahweh. Those who spent the night in secret places hoping for a dream of incubation were seeking the guidance of Yahweh. Incubation led some to the rite of necromancy, which was by all indications a commonly practiced cult of the dead in Yahwism. A death-cult which was in all probablility even more popular involved making sacrifices to deceased spirits. And this cult, like all the others, was in the definition of its practitioners Yahwistic.

Even those Judahites who worshiped the Queen of Heaven and who mourned the death of Tammuz, who dedicated a *marzēaḥ* banquet to a god other than Yahweh and who bowed down to the sun probably considered themselves Yahwists. Certainly those who worshiped Tammuz and the god of the sun used Yahweh's very temple and thus acknowledged the sanctity of at least the cult site of the god of Israel. Moreover, these worshipers are never reported as rejecting Yahweh; they simply believed that it was legitimate in Yahwism to supplement the worship of Yahweh with the worship of other gods. Clearly this belief guided those who participated in the cult of Asherah, for they worshiped this goddess alongside Yahweh as his hypostatized female aspect or even consort. The definition of what constitutes proper Yahwism in popular religion, in short, encompasses far more than the definition of Yahwism proposed by the biblical writers would allow.

This conclusion is indeed inescapable. Whatever the sixth-century biblical texts purport, they can hardly be said to represent all the facets of sixth-century Yahwism. Judahites of the sixth century were worshiping other gods in addition to Yahweh and they were worshiping Yahweh in a number of ways deemed heretical by the theologicans whose writings dominate in the Bible. And these people called themselves Yahwists. That is, sixth-century Yahwism was characterized by a diversity which extends far beyond the parameters seemingly established by the biblical text. Indeed, it is only too obvious that there can be no one definition of what Yahwism was in the exilic period. In particular, the rather monolithic definition of sixth-century

religion urged by P, by the Deuteronomists, and by the prophets (and it is monolithic, despite the minor disagreements which exist between these groups) is for the historian of Israelite religion bankrupt. The priestly/Deuteronomistic/prophetic version of what exilic Yahwism was is only that: a version. Throughout the fabric of Israelite religion in the sixth century was woven an alternative vision, a non-priestly, non-Deuteronomistic, non-prophetic view of what Yahwism was, a view which allowed for the worship of other gods along with Yahweh and which encouraged the worship of Yahweh through rituals condemned in the biblical text.

And this definition of Yahwism espoused in popular religion was in all likelihood the majority view (*pace* yet another claim of the conventional wisdom, which tends to label these popular cults as minority practices of minimal significance to the historian of religion). Certainly the bulk of the Judahite population remained in the land during the exile, while relatively few went to Babylon to be influenced by the program of cultic purification undertaken there.[4] Sheer numbers, then, would be on the side of popular religion. Moreover, our evidence indicates that the various sixth-century cults we have described thrived not on the society's fringes, but in its heart, among all groups and across all classes. Women found satisfaction in baking cakes for the Queen of Heaven and in wailing over Tammuz at the gate of the temple. A second constituency, the aristocrats who were not taken to Babylon (at least in the first exile of 597), participated in a *marzēaḥ* banquet dedicated to a god other than Yahweh within the bounds of the palace

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[4]See Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration*, 20–31, especially 21–23 and n. 24. Ackroyd notes the biblical evidence in Jer 52:28–30 which suggests that only a small portion of the Judahite population went into exile (n. 24) and moreover cites certain indications of continuity in the biblical materials (see also M. Noth, "The Jerusalem Catastrophe of 587 B.C., and its Significance for Israel," *The Laws in the Pentateuch and Other Studies* [Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1966], 263–265). Therefore, he concludes, "the removal of the landed citizens, officials and priests was probably partial" (p. 23; on this see also E. Janssen, *Juda in der Exilszeit: Ein Beitrag zur Frage der Entstehung des Judenthums* [FRLANT 69; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1956], *passim*).

walls. A third guild, possibly a party of priests, also among those not taken to Babylon in at least the first exile,[5] bowed down to the sun god while standing before the temple at the altar of Yahweh himself. Finally, Isa 65:1–7 implies that almost the entire nation (*gôy*, *ʿam*), irrespective of gender and social status, worshiped Yahweh along with Asherah at the *bāmôt* throughout the land.

In the final development of Israelite religion, of course, the majority is suppressed and the priestly/Deuteronomistic/prophetic minority wins. But to historians of Israelite religion, the end should be of no more interest than the means. That is, we should be just as concerned with those who failed as with those who succeeded. It is thus incumbent on us, I would urge, to rewrite our histories of Yahwistic faith to take popular religion into account. We must recall for those whom the Bible has rendered mute the utter diversity which characterized the ancient Israelite cult.

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[5]It is certainly possible that a priestly group remained in the land after 597, and, if we are correct in dating the priestly tomb at Ketef Hinnom to the mid-sixth century, priests were in the land throughout the exile. See, provisionally, G. Barkay, *Ketef Hinnom. A Treasure Facing Jerusalem's Walls* (Jerusalem: The Israel Museum, 1986).

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